

Cambridgeshire Railways Scrapbook 1897 to 1990

Facts, Features and (occasional) Fallacies
reported in Cambridge Newspapers

summarised by

Mike Petty

Many of these stories were featured in my 'Looking Back' column in the Cambridge News from 1996-2014. They are supplemented by some selections 'From our Old Files' published in the Cambridge Independent Press and other notes.

I have digital and other copies of most of the stories summarised.
I hope to publish these online one day
If you would like them in the meantime then please get in touch.

The original volumes are housed in the Cambridgeshire Collection at Cambridge Central Library where there are many other indexes dating back to 1770.

They also have detailed newspaper cuttings files on over 750 topics that have been compiled since the 1960s.

See my website – www.mikepetty.org.uk for further notes.

Other 'Scrapbooks' are available at bit.ly/CambsCollection

Newspapers sometimes get things wrong. I copy things out incorrectly. Do check

There are a multitude of spelling and layout errors. Please forgive or correct them

News never stops but this file was finished on 31 August 2016.

I will maintain supplements and corrections – contact me for anything you need

Please make what use of these notes that you may. Kindly remember where they came from

Mike Petty, Stretham
2016

www.mikepetty.org.uk

1897 01 07

Chesterton UDC debates amalgamation with Cambridge & Cottenham light railway, not one advantage, p3

1897 01 14

Woman killed by train at Sutton junction p3 (inquest 16th p3)

1897 03 11

On Monday evening as a cow was being put in a railway truck it broke loose and scattering all hands by its fierce aspect tore up the Station-road. When it arrived at Back Hill a woman with more courage than her sex are usually credited with under such circumstances rushed out with open arms to stop its progress. The infuriated animal turned on her, but she fortunately escaped. It next ran down Silver Street and put to flight some of the newly-enlisted Militia recruits. It knocked down Reuben Lemon, the Cathedral watchman and attacked Mr J. Rogers and tossed him as high as the eaves of Mrs Ellis' barn.

1897 03 18

Dullingham railway gates smashed, p4

1897 07 05

The Cambridge employees of Messrs Rattee and Kett, Station-road, had their annual outing to Scarborough. The party, numbering upwards of 100, left Cambridge by special train (to which, by the courtesy of Mr Holditch, the G.E.R. station-master, three saloons had been attached for their convenience) at 5 a.m., Scarborough being reached at 11 a.m. Through the generosity of the firm refreshments were liberally supplied both going and returning.

1897 07 10

Outrage on railway, p3

1897 11 04

Cottenham railway, p3 *

1898 01 2-

Cambridgeshire County Council Road and Bridges Committee reported that had received an application from Toft that the Council should support a petition to the London and North Western Railway Company to place a station or siding at Toft or Kingston Bridge. They were of the opinion that such a station would greatly benefit several villages now four or six miles distance from a railway station and would be of advantage to Caxton R.D.C. in obtaining road material. They therefore recommend the petition be supported

1898 02 22

Rail accident to rag and bone man, Sutton, p3 *

1898 03 09

Newmarket proposed railway, p3 *

1898 05 06

Cottenham parish council light railway, p8 *

1898 05 11

Cottenham parish council considered a request from the Milton parish council asking them to join in petitioning the County Council to take such steps as might seem fit for the purpose of constructing a light railway from the crossing on the Milton Road to Cottenham via Landbeach. After discussing the question it was agreed that the Milton route would be best for passenger traffic to Cambridge. Therefore it was agreed to support the petition

1898 06 29

Newmarket railway, p3 *

1898 08 31

The securing of the Midsummer Common for the show grounds of the Barnum and Bailey's Circus, having been completed, they have found it necessary to make a change in a number of their plans for the visit to Cambridge. The large number of excursionists from the country districts who will be attracted by the presence of the show will be thankful for the change. It will be possible to enjoy the evening show with comfort, in the consciousness that it is easy to catch the trains afterwards. The big show will arrive in Cambridge on four special trains, with a total of 74 railway cars. The unloading will be done in the G.E. railway yards, and the entire city of canvas, 14 tents in all, will be put up in the morning before the parade starts out. Every bit of the show is coming to Cambridge # c.76.2
Beer to children, p2

1898 09 29

Henley Arthur Bedwell, a Cambridge piano and organ builder claimed £2 from the Great Eastern Railway for damages sustained by a piano and a case which had been considerably damaged by wet. The manager of the Cutter inn, Ely said he packed the piano before it was sent back. He took it to Ely station and deposited in a goods shed. James Merry, goods foreman at the station, gave evidence as to loading the piano safely on a truck. A tarpaulin was tied over it. There were some barrels of beer in the same wagon, but they were not leaking. Harold Pain, an optician, produced a register proving that there was no rain during the transit of the piano.

1898 10 27

The population of the town of Cambridge has increased very much during the past 10 years, especially in the Petersfield and Romsey town area. Up till 10 years ago the chancel of the present St Barnabas Church was the only place of worship in the extensive district. Mainly by reason of the enterprise of Mr Sturton in providing land for building purposes, the district became so large that it became necessary to carry out the building of the complete Church; this was done in 1887. The substitution by the Great Eastern Railway Company of a handsome bridge for the old level crossing in Mill Road gave a great impetus to building in what is now Romsey town and the church of ease of St Phillip's was established. Now the time has come for Romsey town to be raised to the status of an ecclesiastical Parish, with St Phillip's as the parish church

1898 11 04

Chippenham train accident, p3

1898 12 06

Two boys aged eight and nine were charged with unlawfully placing upon the L. & W N railway two trolley wheels and an axle with intent to obstruct a train at Little Eversden. Daniel Garner, driver of the engine from Cambridge to Bletchley, stated that after passing Lord's Bridge station he saw them on the line in front of him. He shut off the steam and applied the brake, but could not stop in time, and the trolley wheels were smashed to pieces. They were an odd pair of wheels, out of use, and were lying beside the line. The vicar of Comberton gave the boys a good character. They were bound over and cautioned not to go on to the line to play again

1898 12 28

A strange discovery was made on Boxing Day at the Cambridge railway station by a cleaner. It appears that in the performance of his ordinary duties he was sweeping the carriages of a London and North Western train working between Cambridge and Bletchley, when he came across a brown paper parcel concealed under the seat of a third class compartment. Suspicious of its contents, the man removed it to the cloak room. The parcel was opened without delay and discovered to contain the dead body of a newly born male child.

1899 01 24

A sad affair has occurred at Linton which resulted in the death of an eleven year old girl. The mother was seen to be taking the child to the railway station. It was noticed that the girl was ill, and clung to the fence. When at the station she collapsed, and slipping off the seat, was put back again with some force. At this time she was foaming at the mouth and became unconscious. Mr D.B. Herbert, the station master, acted in a most remain way and had the girl removed to his house. The doctor found she was suffering from malignant scarlet fever and she died the same evening

1899 02 14

Hemingford vicar killed railway *

1899 03 11

An Italian was charged with riding on the Great Eastern Railway from Wimblington to Histon without having previously paid his fare. James Franklin, a guard, said he saw the prisoner get into the train. At Swavesey station some boys informed him there was a man under the seat in the railway carriage. The man said he had been in the country for six months and had been obtaining his living by playing a concertina, but the instrument had gone wrong, and he had no money to buy a new one. The police-court missionary is looking after the case.

1899 03 18

A Newmarket policeman died due to injuries received during the early hours of Friday morning. It is presumed he walked along the railway line in the direction of the old platform of the town station as he spoke to the night watchman who was cleaning the carriages in a siding. Later he was seen wandering about in a lane, suffering from bad concussion of the brain and a severe fracture of the skull. There are some deep pits over which laden trucks of coal are brought and the coal unloaded and in one of these was found his helmet and lantern, its sides battered in

1899 04 10

The foolhardiness of trespassing on the railway has been strikingly exemplified by a shocking accident near Black Bank station a few miles from Ely. A platelayer after drinking with a friend at the Railway Tavern proceeded homewards along the railway. It was one of the darkness of nights, and the wind, howling across the fens, probably had the effect of making the noise of an approaching train inaudible. Both men had only covered a short distance when one observed the light of a train at close quarters and shouted to his companion, who unfortunately stepped the wrong way and thus met his fate.

1899 05 01

Railway clerks combine, p3

1899 05 17c

In the common run of life, no class of men is trusted more than railway engine drivers. It has often been found that the safety of hundreds of lives has been the result of the heroism of the driver of a train. One of those who spent such a life is Mr James Cook, now the landlord of the "Post Boy", Bridge Street, Hitchin, who is 46 years of age and who had been a driver on the Great Northern Railway for over 23 years. He told a reporter: "I never intended giving up the work until I became ill with indigestion. Then I was persuaded to try Dr Williams pink pills for pale people. If I had known about them before I should never have given up railway work"

1899 06 07

A carter, in the employ of Mr F. Marshall, was loading barrels of tar from the gas works into a truck at the railway station, Saffron Walden, when one of the barrels burst, with the result that Marshall was saturated, his face receiving the full force of the shower of tar, which got into his eyes, causing great agony. He was conveyed to Dr Wagstaff's surgery, and after treatment driven to his home at Linton. Hopes are entertained that his eyes will not be permanently affected.
Barnwell railway accident, p3

1899 06 08

Poor Florrie R-- died at Linton last January. On a cold winter day this child of eleven, while suffering from scarlet fever, was by her own mother taken out of the house and dragged to the station in order that she might be sent by train to her grandmother. When the child got to the station she collapsed utterly. Her temperature was 105 degrees. That evening she died. The mother was convicted of wilfully exposing the child to the injury of its health and sentenced to two months imprisonment. Had an animal been treated as Florrie was, people would have cried "shame"

1899 07 05

The Great Eastern Railway Company has for many years been engaged in carrying the workpeople of East London to and from their work and Liverpool Street and Fenchurch Street stations every morning are thronged with the wage earners of East London. Now within a few miles of Cambridge Messrs Chivers have established a jam factory and in the fruit picking season employ an average of 8,000 people, most drawn from Cambridge. For their benefit the Great Eastern Railway has now provided trains to Histon, morning and night. These are of immense convenience to the fruit pickers and in putting them on the railway company has in promoting its own welfare promoted also that of Cambridge

1899 07 05

Cottenham railway plans, p3

1899 08 06c

A quantity of wheat in a field belonging to Mr S. Gentle, near the Barnwell allotments, which had been recently cut, was discovered to be on fire. In a very short time plenty of assistance was secured, but despite all efforts, the produce of nearly an acre was destroyed before the fire could be extinguished. The outbreak is supposed to have been caused by a spark from a passing railway engine alighting on one of the sheaves.

1899 08 12

A most disastrous fire broke out in the vicinity of Dullingham. Mr Bye, the foreman of Hill Farm, had alighted from the train at Dullingham station when his attention was called to a fire in the stackyard of his employer. He at once gave the alarm. With praiseworthy speed Mr Chittock, the Dullingham stationmaster, and by his direction, his staff also, arrived and assisted to remove 14 horses, 25 cows, pigs and other animals to a place of safety. Special mention is due of the hearty manner in which the farm hands and the station staff worked

1899 11 02

When residents in St Andrew's street, Cambridge, saw a procession of cabs passing onward "all mournful and slow" to the railway station the people knew that someone had been sent down from the University. From Emmanuel College a youth emerged and under a shower of rice made hurriedly for the cab waiting at the door. The driver, "Gentleman Joe" wore a tall hat draped with crape, and so did the drivers of some four cabs what followed. The hero of the hour entered the Great Northern Station, the train moving out to the strains of "Auld Lang Syne". Meanwhile the cabbies grove back to their respective stands. They were of more cheerful aspect on the return journey and each puffed a festive cigar.

1899 11 13

Cambridge has got a long railway station, but there would not have been an inch of standing room to spare on the platform if all the people who desired to get in had been permitted to do so. Shortly before noon the procession of Reservists arrived and from that time till the train left all was wild excitement. The difficulty was to get the men who were leaving away from their friends, and in the long run there was nothing for it but to effect something like a forcible separation. Eventually, amid vociferous cheering the train got away and the defenders of the country were fairly on their way to do the country's bidding

1899 11 14

Mr Richard Langford of James Street, Cambridge, has passed away within a fortnight of obtaining the great age of 100 years. He was early in life placed in a gang of lighters which plied between King's Lynn and Cambridge and acquired a gang of his own. For many years he brought coals to Cambridge until the railway was opened, when he retired.

1899 12 09

John Ginn, 12 years of age, living at Saxon-street, a hamlet near Newmarket, has just distinguished himself by a curious adventure. Having read of the boy who killed three Boers in the South African War, his spirit burned within him to go and do likewise. Emptying his money box he had enough to pay his railway fare to Ely and set forth. He left behind pinned on the wall of his room this curious epistle: - "Dear mother and father, I am going to be a soldier and shoot Boers with a revolver, like the boy Sherlock did. Goodbye, John Ginn". The boy was interviewed by the Colonel in command at Ely who gave him some good advice and a return railway fare home

1900 01 20

For the second time since the Boer ultimatum the consequences of war have been brought very close to Cambridge. This morning there was a second demonstration in which Town and Gown joined hands in a common feeling of respect for those who, though not compelled by laws to leave the old country, were nevertheless anxious to lend a hand in the war. Shortly after ten o'clock the special train steamed out of the siding, kisses were blown and the Volunteers who will represent Cambridge at the front were out of sight, but not out of mind 1900

1900 01 27

Cottenham light railway, p4

1900 02 15

Stonea Grange situate by the side of the Great Eastern Railway near Stonea station was destroyed by fire. The March fire brigade left in a snowstorm and experienced some difficulty in getting to the scene on account of the many drifts which had been made during the night. The house was an old-fashioned one and contained some splendid oak-panelled rooms, all of which were destroyed

1900 03 06

Sir – At present gates cross the railway line on Milton Road, Cambridge, and a sub-way is provided for vehicular traffic. After heavy rains it is flooded some feet deep and a few days ago the driver of a carriage containing an invalid lady found over five feet of water there, and no room to turn round. The invalid and her attendant had to sit up to their knees in water, and in their saturated clothes had to proceed to the Hospital. – Viator

1900 05 08

An accident occurred at the Norwich crossing, at Queen Adelaide, Ely. A cattle train proceeding at a fair rate dashed into one of the gates which had remained closed across the line. The crash was terrific and caused much alarm to those who heard it. Portions of the gate were flung to a distance of about 50 yards. One portion damaged the spouting of the gatekeeper's house, and after making a hole in the roof, fell into the garden at the back. The gate was a perfect wreck, the iron bars being twisted and broken. The gatekeeper was temporarily engaged at the spot in place of the usual man who was away on holiday. He felt sure the way was clear for the train and it is at present very difficult to account for the gate being shut across the line

1900 05 16

The evil-disposed person who has been paying nocturnal visits to the railway stations in the neighbourhood of Cambridge with the ostensible object of plundering the booking office, has scarcely been adequately remunerated for his trouble. He was first heard of at Histon station. In the morning

the outer and inner doors of the office were still locked, and the windows were intact. The booking clerk was surprised, therefore, to find that the sum of £1.0.4d, the whole of the cash available, was missing. There was nothing to show in what way the thief had entered the premises. Stations at Quy, Bottisham and Barnwell were also visited and entered.

1900 07 26

In view of the serious issues which are involved for so many people in the prospect of an immediate strike on the Great Eastern Railway, a correspondent has suggested that the C.D.N. should tender its advice to the local employees and the Company was to what they should do. The people who travel at Bank Holiday are not the rich and well-to-do, but the workers and wage-earners and the strange spectacle will be presented of working men seriously incommoded by the action of other working men. How can this evoke public sympathy?

1900 07 27

In the C.D.N. of yesterday the inadvisability, not to say folly of a general strike at Bank Holiday time of the employees of the Great Eastern Railway was emphasised. It is therefore with great gratification that we announce today that a strike has been averted. The thanks of the whole public are due to our contemporary, the "Daily News", for promoting and carrying out the negotiations which have led to so happy a result.

1900 08 07

Bank Holiday Monday was a wretched day for pleasure seekers, due solely to the almost continuous downpour of rain and the cyclone that accompanied it. The Great Eastern Railway Company ran excursions to Haverhill for the athletic meeting, for which some 200 passengers booked.

1900 08 15

An accident happened at Cherry Hinton. The 8.55 passenger train was due, but the gates over the Cherry Hinton crossing remained closed; consequently the engine, which was travelling backwards, dashed into them with horrific force and smashed them to pieces. The head lamp on the engine was broken, but no other damage was done. The gatekeeper has been suspended.

1900 08 18

W.H. Smith & Son have recently made a great improvement at the St Ives railway station in opening their smart new bookstall, at which all publications can now be obtained. It promises an abundant selection of literature and should prove to be of great improvement to both the travelling public and the inhabitants of St Ives & district.

1900 08 20

The Star Brewery Company applied for a licence to sell intoxicating liquors at a house about to be constructed near the railway station, Swaffham Prior. It would be a substantial house consisting of a bar, smoke room, parlour and other conveniences with two bedrooms which could be converted into a club room. They would erect a bridge across the watercourse for horses and carts and two footbridges. It would be used by persons shooting in the neighbourhood. The licence of the Cow and Calf in the village would be given up because Mr Allix did not want two licences in the village.

1900 08 28

Somersham fatal rail accident, p3

1900 0 29

The Star Brewery applied for a licence for a new hotel which it was proposed to build in close contiguity to the new railway station which the Great Eastern Company were building at Newmarket.

The station would be one of the architectural features of the town and it had occurred to those who catered for the public that if a station of that magnitude was to be erected, there should be a hotel worthy of the station. The Brewery had secured the services as architect of Colonel Edis, who had prepared the plans of Sandringham House. It would be in the Georgian style with a red brick front and would contain eight bedrooms. The company would give up the Lamb Inn licence and the provisional licence for a new hotel near Warren Hill station. The licence was refused

1900 10 27

A sad suicide occurred at Lt Thetford where a platelayer employed on the G.E.R. imagined that he was a sufferer from scarlet fever, although medical examinations proved to the contrary. There were several cases in the village. Shortly before ten o'clock he left his fellow-workers near the bridge over the Old West not telling them where he was going. Time passed and a shepherd brought the intelligence that a handkerchief had been found in the wash near the river. After a diligent search his body was found in the water beneath the railway bridge

1900 12 03

A sad fatality happened on the railway near Black Bank Station, the victim being a farmer who was well known in the district. Earlier in the day he transacted business at Ely, returning in a friend's cart. Later in the evening he joined a number of his friends at the Railway Tavern near the station, parting company with them to go to his house in the Second Drove. He did not arrive home. In the morning the driver of a train called out that there was a dead man laying on the metals with his legs severed.

1901 01 17

For some time the Cambridge Borough Surveyor had hired a wharf in the L.N.W.R. railway yard, principally for the purposes of stone breaking. The rent had been £2 but the Company now proposed to increase it to £3 per annum. The surveyor considered it would be advantageous to continue the tenancy.

1901 01 29

Few spots in and around Cambridge have become more notorious for the number of fatalities which they yield than the vicinity of Barnwell Junction and the stretch of line between that point and the level crossing on the Chesterton side of the railway bridge which spans the Cam. And probably nothing has ever surpassed in ghastliness the gruesome discovery made there during the early hours of Tuesday morning. The unfortunate victim was a telegraph linesman.

Barnwell junction accident, p3 *, inquest 31st p3

1901 02 12

As we tread the borders of the 20th century we wonder whether the people of the year 2001 will find the railway train be a thing of the past because they are using flying machines as a means of locomotion. Will the fact of sending a message along a wire be deemed romantic at that period or will the telegraph appear to them as old fashioned and romantic as the first efforts of telegraphy by means of wooden arms do to us. The romance of looking forward is to us not to be compared with that of looking back.

1901 03 20

Horse injured in railway transit, p3 *

1901 04 09

The atmospheric conditions in Cambridge on Easter Monday were on the whole delightful and the people made the most of the opportunities for outdoor amusement and recreation. There was an increase of traffic on the Great Eastern Railway. Excursions were run to Hunstanton, 50 persons leaving, and 70 went to Yarmouth, 20 to Cromer, 20 to Lowestoft and 150 to London by excursions that day. Another excursion brought 362 persons from London to Cambridge.

1901 05 06

Today Cambridge formally recognises and honours the loyalty of her sons who have been at the war in South Africa. The arrival of the Volunteers at Cambridge Station was very quiet and orderly. There were no decorations but a barrier had been drawn across the platform & as time wore on the railway officials became more stringent as to whom they allowed within. There was excitement as a train was seen slowing steaming in with khaki-coloured arms and bronzed faces thrust out of the windows and in another minute the men were standing on the platform, after fifteen months' experience of war and travelling.

1901 06 13

Yarmouth Guardians received a report on the dissection of paupers' bodies. They had been sent to Cambridge by officials of the workhouse since 1881. Professor Macalister sent a cheque for £6 14s 6d for each body but only £5 10s 0d was really incurred for expenses. The railway charge for the carriage of a body was £4 6s.0d but the Master's clerk said it was £4 9s.0d and that he put the other 3s. in the poor box. £1 was paid for a coffin but he received 1s. from the undertaker. All the clerk had to do was to see the body was screwed down, go to the railway station and pay the charge. He said he gave the porters sixpence each but inquiry proved they only received a pint of beer

1901 06 26

The success of the Ely branch of the Railway Mission must give the promoters the greatest satisfaction. Time was when the meetings were held in the waiting-room at Ely station, afterwards the gatherings took place in a small building in Barton Square, till it was found desirably to remove to the Liberal Hall pending the erection of a new mission in Silver Street. Gypsy Smith led the way at the laying of the foundation stone, accompanying on the violin the singing of the hymn "Onward, Christian Soldiers".

1901 07 08

About 100 employees of Messrs Rattee and Kett spent a most enjoyable day at the Crystal Palace, seeing the Naval and Military Exhibition being held there. The great feature was the stupendous Military Band Concert. The employees of Messrs Redding & Son spent an enjoyable day at Brighton; a saloon carriage was attached to the Great Northern Railway train which left Cambridge at 4.45 am. Messrs Scales and Robins employees enjoyed a combined sea and rail trip and journeyed from Lowestoft to Yarmouth by steamer

1901 07 29

A series of tactical exercises were carried out by about 210 members of the Suffolk Regiment. A Bury force was to occupy Newmarket; they were conveyed by train to Kennet where they detrained and made their way in the direction of Waterhal. When the Newmarket Brigade had almost reached the "Boy's Grave" cyclist scouts reported having seen the enemy approaching and orders given for the men to remain in perdu in the brushwood. The sound of firing was soon heard but Newmarket easily held the attack. Lessons learned in South Africa were developed and acted upon.

1901 08 09

Messrs Pink Brothers new 'Knackery' in Coldham's Lane, Cambridge, stands in an isolated spot and is constructed on the most hygienic principles. In one corner is a large dissecting table and there are two huge coppers for boiling down the carcasses, the remains of which are subsequently sent away by rail. Some distance away is a tank ventilated with a shaft considerably higher than the top of the passenger carriages that may pass on the railway. The possibility of any offensive odour reaching travellers is thus quite obviated and the same care has been exhibited in regard to any unpleasantness that may arise from the boiling operations.

1901 11 26

A Chesterton lady, Miss A. Masterson of Humberstone Road, was among a number of passengers who underwent an alarming experience while travelling by the Central London Railway, which is better known as the "Twopenny Tube". A train was suddenly stopped as it was about to enter Marble Arch Station. The tunnel became filled with dense and suffocating smoke. Several ladies fainted and

others became hysterical. People were rushing pell-mell from the front of the train, scrambling over seats to get out of danger. Then the lights went out. It was twenty minutes before the train moved back slowly. There was a terrible smell of burning flesh and it was learned that a gentleman had fallen in front of the train and been crushed to death.

1902 01 13

Saffron Walden council heard the November horse fair was rapidly declining and very little genuine trade was done. It had been reduced almost to an encampment of travelling shows and other attractions, bringing together a large number of dealers in caravans with their animals and other accessories, under very undesirable conditions. The noise of steam organs, roundabouts and shooting galleries caused a great annoyance to the residents. But Coun Williams said that 200 additional persons came into the town by train on the fair day, 20 horses were sent away by rail, and a great number more travelled by road. It was resolved that the fair should be abolished.

1902 01 15

The 'Cambridge Express' charges the police with having supplied the CDN with information and refusing to give it to the other newspapers. This is unfair. The CDN gathered its own news in its own way, without any help from the police at all. We telegraphed to Cork for a report of the hearing before magistrates which gave the probable date of arrival of the suspect in Cambridge. Three reporters were stationed along the railway. One at Gamlingay saw detective Marsh and the prisoner in a compartment, entered the carriage and rode with them, thus securing the information. c.04

1902 01 17

The stationmaster at Fulbourn told the court that under the company's rules the Teversham railway gatekeeper had no right to appoint anyone to take charge of the gates. He had to be at the gate all the day, but had a boy relieve him during the dinner hour. On the day of the accident he had been suffering from diarrhoea and went to the Baker's Arms to get something to stop it. He had twopennyworths of whiskey and some ginger wine. He did not return because he was ill and did not feel capable. PC Salmon said he found one of the gates broken; the boy was there with a hand lamp. The jury returned a verdict of guilty with a very strong recommendation to mercy. He was discharged and would not lose his pension.

1902 02 07

Swavesey Rural District Council considered the recent smallpox epidemic. Each division must provide its own isolated building for such cases. Each councillor had been asked to look around their parishes and see if they could find a cottage sufficiently isolated to serve as a smallpox hospital in case of emergency. No one seemed to have discovered such a spot. The St Ives district had purchased a couple of railway carriages which were being used. It was proposed that two such carriages be purchased by the Council.

1902 02 10

Saffron Walden railway accident, p3 *

1902 02 12

Cambridge Electric Supply Company reported that they would probably outgrow the present site, in Thompson's Lane. They had secured a site at Chesterton, situated at the side of the railway line so they would be able to bring coals into the yard and they had also arranged for the use of the river and the road. The site would not be required yet but as no other spot on the river was so placed they were justified in buying the land

1902 04 07

The Great Eastern Railway Company opened for traffic their new station at Newmarket, about a quarter of a mile nearer the Race Course. It provides very superior accommodation for dealing with passenger traffic. Long platforms have been constructed, connected by a subway with excellent waiting accommodation and spacious refreshment rooms specially designed to provide for the

requirements of the race traffic. Colonel McCalmont has constructed new roads which afford good facilities for reaching the new Station both from the town and race course as well as from the direction of Cheveley

1902 04 21

The King passed through Cambridge on his way from Sandringham to London. The special train steamed through at a slow pace. The king was plainly visible reading a daily paper. A barrier was thrown across the station where the London trains go out. A number of people assembled on that part of the platform which was open to the public, but there was no demonstration.

1902 05 19

A young man in charge of a horse attached to a cart left it unattached in the station yard at Ashwell while he took a parcel to the booking office. The horse became restive, dashed off into the goods yard and crossed the sidings to the main line, following closely in the wake of the 7.39 down train. The runaway continued on its career till it reached the Litlington gate level crossing where in endeavouring to cross the line it fell. It was at length secured and seemed none the worse for its gallop

1902 05 20

Railway presentation, p2

1902 08 15

His dusky Highness Lewanika, King of the Barotseland, with his equerry, arrived at Newmarket Station on a short visit to Dalham Hall, the residence which the late Cecil Rhodes purchased for something over £100,000 shortly before his death. Their advent was almost unnoticed as the secret of the time of their arrival had been so well kept that even at the railway station it was unknown. The Newmarket Town Band had been retained to play at Dalham at a garden party but no definite date was given until late on Wednesday. The king played croquet on the fine lawn in front of the Hall and returned to the station for the London train.

1902 11 13

Newmarket councillors will ask the Great Eastern Railway Company to run a certain number of the special trains in race week to and from the old station because of the serious effects upon tradesmen caused by the opening of the new railway station. In the Cesarewitch and Cambridgeshire weeks when race trains were sent to the old station people had patronised the shops of the tradesmen on the road to the course and that showed plainly what a loss the diversion of the traffic had been. But the Railway Company considered their own interests before those of the town.

1902 11 14

A piece of work, involving operations similar to those by which the "Tube" railway was constructed, is on the point of being finished, having been in progress for nearly twelve months. It is the sewer connecting the New Cemetery with the Sewage Farm, Cambridge. Its length is over a mile and in some places it is laid to a depth of 24 feet. The greater part of the work has been done by the "tunnelling" system and carried out entirely by Cambridge men under the supervision of the Borough Surveyor

1902 12 24

During a lull in the traffic at Ely Railway Station, Sir George Newnes, the former Liberal MP for East Cambs, addressed a gathering of railway men on the green outside the station. The railway audience was augmented by citizens who gave their former member a cordial welcome. The railway authorities, he said, had been very kind in allowing the men to leave their work to hear him.

1903 01 02

Ely Rural Council's surveyor prepared a plan of the Grunty Fen road showing the proposed building at Wilburton station by the G.E.R. Company. Mr Pell said it was a one-storey building and the man was frequently complaining of the dampness of the house. It would be better if the Company would

run up a second storey. It was going to be a very expensive matter to force them to remove the building. They agreed to withdrawn their opposition provided the Railway Company undertook they would not further advance their buildings to the south-west corner of the station.

1903 01 15

The Directors of the Great Eastern Railway Company have replied to the petition asking them to use the old station at Newmarket for some of the race traffic. They remind the inhabitants that the large and costly station recently erected was the outcome of constant representations from the racing community who complained about the inconveniences of the old station. Keen competition has arisen during the past ten years through the establishment of race meetings at such places as Sandown and Lingfield resulting in the falling off of numbers attending Newmarket Meetings. This influenced their decision to build a large new station affording every facility to race goers as near the course as possible. The late Colonel McCalmont had planned to develop the land alongside for building purposes and thus add to the prosperity of Newmarket as a residential place

1903 01 21

An inquest was held on the body of a railway locomotive fireman. The engine driver said he was driving a train from Peterborough to London, passing through Shelford. The deceased had fired up at Shepreth Junction. On approaching Shelford Bridge he saw deceased standing on the engine side of the tender raking coal towards him. That was the last time he saw him. He looked forward to watch the signals and first missed the fireman when approaching Sawston siding. If he had seen his mate fall he would have stopped at once. The body was found on line near the bridge

1903 03 02

P.C. Salmon told the court he had been called to Fulbourn signal box and found the stationmaster and another man in charge of the box with the door locked. The defendant, a signalman, was outside. He was drunk and creating a disturbance. Subsequently he'd gone back to the station, got inside the box and abused the man who had taken his place. The policeman had ejected him but the man remained very close to the station and was abusive. He had also been ejected from the Railway Tavern and the magistrates were glad the landlord had acted properly. He should always be careful in dealing with railway men

1903 03 23

A two-year-old baby boy was found on a seat on the Cambridge Railway Station platform. Nobody could be found to claim the youngster who was contentedly munching a bun and entirely oblivious to his surroundings. He was fairly well dressed but had no parcel containing extra clothes or anything that could lead to his identification. The Great Northern stationmaster's wife (Mrs Fenn) took charge of the little fellow and he was subsequently given into the charge of the police and removed to the Workhouse to await identification.

1903 04 02

Swaffham Prior rail accident, p3

1903 05 23

A man living in Ainsworth Street, Cambridge was diagnosed with small-pox. He was forthwith removed to the small-pox huts, Coldham's Lane, and all known contacts vaccinated and kept under observation. He was a goods guard on the Great Eastern Railway whose train shunted opposite the small-pox camp in Tottenham Marshes and there was reason to believe there was communication between persons in the camps and the officials on the train. It is highly probable the disease was incepted from the camps. He made a good recovery

1903 06 17

For the past two days thousands of acres around Sawston and Whittlesford have been flooded to the depth of six feet; a considerable stretch of the main railway line has been under water and trains have to very carefully plough through it. A gang of platelayers were at work to combat with anything that

might occur and slag, granite and other ballast was unloaded. Early in the afternoon the water sank considerably and the rails were for the most part visible. A new danger presented itself for as the water subsided the ballast began to disappear and, the line becoming unsafe, all traffic was stopped.

1903 07 10

Electric railways, p3

1903 07 30

Cambridge Commercial Traveller's Association submitted a petition to the Great Eastern Railway Company praying for an improved service. The want of a train between Cambridge and London which would permit business men to reach the City before 10 am is very badly felt and there is no return to Cambridge between 5.15 and 8.20 pm which causes great inconvenience. Such provision would render it possible for gentlemen engaged in business in London to reside in Cambridge, which at present is found impossible, owing to the absence of convenient trains. 03 07 30

1903 08 25

Sir – the famous barrows known as the Bartlow Hills will soon be no more. It matters nothing that they were reared in Roman times or are the private property of a possessor bent on preserving these splendid relics. The railway company that would have destroyed them 50 years ago but for determined opposition at the time, has set its mind on their removal. They have elected to run their lines through the barrows instead of around them. So the picks of English navvies, backed by compulsory powers, will soon be at work 'dinging doon' these works of our Romano British forefathers, since they stand in the way of their company's dividends. It is nothing short of a national scandal - A.R. Goddard

1903 10 12

There was another heavy downpour of rain; the Cam has but in a few places overflowed its banks and the ferries between Cambridge and Chesterton are still working. The Granta has not behaved so well and the water is already over the banks; there is a vast expanse of water with the tops of the hedges and the trees only showing. At Grantchester mill the road is knee deep. The basement of houses in Newmarket High Street are flooded as are some of the low-lying streets at Saffron Walden and the railway line at Chesterford is threatened with being submerged.

1903 11 09

Waterbeach railway accident, p4

1904 01 23

Shelford railway guard killed, p3

1904 03 22

Newmarket councillors heard a great many complaints had been made with regard to cabs loitering in the High Street and the police had difficulty regulating the traffic. Owing to the removal of the railway station a good many of the cab ranks were no longer used and the cabmen had nowhere to take their cabs. There were several charabancs and brakes in the town better than those which came from outside but they had never been able to ply for hire. They should reduce the number of hackney carriage licences and not grant them to anybody outside twenty-mile radius. One said that after the races a whole turnout would be sold for £5, with the driver's great coat thrown in.

1904 04 02

Messrs Chivers propose to erect a number of model cottages for the accommodation of their workpeople. At present many of the employees live in adjoining villages and are compelled to walk to the factory each day, while others are conveyed to and from Cambridge by train. The scheme has already started; not far from the village chapel there are four cottages which occupy little more space than the ordinary dreary erection in which the working man has to make his home. But brains as well as bricks and mortar have been used in their construction. They are really miniature villas with

windows of the old-fashioned lattice type and are approached through rustic gates. If the new houses are on the same scale many will cast envious eyes at Histon and its happy inhabitants

1904 04 30

At midnight Friday, the driver of a goods train from Cambridge discovered that several of his trucks were on fire. He got to Audley End station as quickly as possible when it was found that a truck of straw, another containing corn, and also one loaded with mangolds had become ignited. The burning trucks were promptly shunted on to the Walden branch siding, and strenuous efforts were made to extinguish the flames. However the trucks of wheat straw was burnt out. The corn is somewhat damaged, and also the truck containing the mangolds

1904 07

Mr F.B. Kelly has retired as District Manager of the Great Northern Railway at Cambridge after 55 years' service. He began at Lincoln when the railway began to compete with a boat that used to ply between Lincoln and Boston. Instead of seeking to attract custom by providing a more comfortable means of travelling they decided that anything cheap, though nasty, would do. They provided fourth-class carriages which had neither seats nor covering and packed them in like so many sheep. He also recalls the better type of carriage that was modelled on the stage coach and remembers how before the introduction of vans luggage used to be piled on the top of the carriages and covered over with a sheet

1904 09 03

Railway attack, p4 *

1904 10 29+

The vicar of Deeping St Nicholas pleaded for the creation of new roads. He said that poor people living in the neighbourhood of Tongue End were for months and months shut out from civilisation, from schools, from churches and chapels, and from any social entertainment. They could not leave their homes for six months in the year, children going to schools had to wade almost knee-deep in mud for two miles, and farmers complained of losses through inability to get their produce to the railway.

1904 11 11

Cement making has already become a very important Cambridge industry. Extensive new works are rapidly approaching completion and have made a great change in the landscape of Cherry Hinton. The pleasant path through the fields from the end of Mill Road is hardly recognisable now. It has been diverted to make room for a huge collection of buildings from which a new siding leads to the railway line close at hand. These are the Norman Cement Company's works

1904 11 15

A gruesome accident occurred at the railway crossing at Little Thetford. Two men were returning from Fulbourn with the corpse of an Ely native who was by trade a basket maker and had been detained in the asylum. A four-wheel cart, with no lights, collided with their trap which was turned over on to its side. The horse was dragged down with it and the two men hurt. The coffin containing the corpse was left on the road and the trap had to make a second journey to convey the remains to Ely

1904 12 07

A serious accident occurred to men repairing a railway bridge between Mildenhall and Isleham. At the time part of the arch of the bridge had been taken away and girders substituted. While standing on the arch it gave way and precipitated three men on to the railway which was blocked by the ruins of the bridge. By one o'clock however the line had been cleared and the injured men taken to Cambridge, a train having been stopped to convey them. Two others also fell with the bridge but fortunately escaped injury.

1904 12 24

Rail fog, p4

1905 02 04

Mr P.R. Salmon writes: I have in my possession one of the old original song sheets sold in the streets of Cambridge a few days after the visit of the Shah of Persia in 1873. You will recollect that the Mayor and Vice Chancellor went with their entourage to await his arrival at the railway station, only to find it was a hoax. Part of the verse reads: 'The Mayor and Council so queer did look, As from the station they took their hook; The Chancellor the back slums did go, As he didn't want all the people to know, That he didn't see the Shah of Persia'

1905 02 09

In the light of recent developments of the motor bus, Cambridge people must feel devoutly thankful for the failure of the proposed electric tramway scheme. When it was proposed we felt compelled to protest against the introduction of an ugly and cumbersome system, totally unfitted to our narrow and crowded streets. We advised the provision of 'motor buses and the gradual abolition of even those tramlines which exist at present. The great objection to the motor 'bus was that it was only in an experimental stage but now the London trials show they stand out as the road vehicle of the future. Railway companies are adopting them as 'feeders' instead of constructing additional branch lines or light railroads. We do not think anyone would seriously argue that an electric tram system would be preferable to an efficient motor 'bus service for Cambridge. 05 02 09

1905 02 14

Magistrates heard that there were four public rooms in the fully-licensed 'Wait For the Bus' at Bottisham. There were four alehouses, four beerhouses and one grocer's licence for a population of 624. It used to be a very good pub when the old omnibuses used to run to Cambridge but since the railways had been opened there was little or no traffic on the road to Burwell. The landlord, Samuel Marshman said the trade amounted to about three barrels a month but it also provided teas and luncheons. He did not want the licence to be extinguished. 05 02 14b

1905 02 25

It would appear as though the automobile is going to revolutionise transit in all departments and the next application is likely to be the railways. The Great Northern Railway Company have been allowing a motor manufacturing company to make experiments upon their lines with a petrol car as a conveyance over branch lines passing through sparsely-populated districts. It is being seriously considered whether the automobile carriage carrying a few passengers shall not supersede the ordinary locomotive-drawn train. The car with which experiments are being made ran into Cambridge from Hitchin. It is driven by two engines and lighted by electricity obtained from storage batteries. Some parts of the journey were covered at about 50 m.p.h. 05 02 25

1905 03 24

A sad discovery was made at Ely of a tailor, found dead on the Cutter Railway Bridge. His head was in the four-foot way, severed from the body, which was on the other side of the line, and his hat and collar were on the buttress of the bridge. He was last seen at 10.40 pm when he was going in the direction of the Great Eastern Railway gates, near the station 05 03 24b

1905 07 01

Tea dealers have been running down their stock prior to the reduction in tax announced by the Budget. Last night there was a tremendous rush to get tea out of bond to replenish supplies. At Cambridge the stores of the four railway companies have been converted into bonded warehouses where tea has been accumulating and by Friday they had 245 chests ready for delivery. At six o'clock this morning about 23 tons was taken away to the shops so customers can be supplied. 05 07 01

1905 07 08

An accident which came within a shade of becoming a fearful disaster occurred on the main London to Norwich railway line at Lt Downham. A herd of horses were crossing in Kiln Lane when they

stampeded into the line. An express train came around the curve and dashed into the animals. Four were killed outright and a fifth injured. The engine and some of the coaches passed over the carcasses of the horses but by some miracle the train kept on the metals. The bodies were removed and the train continued its journey within 20 minutes 05 07 08d

1905 09 06

Sir – thousands of people in Romsey Town are anxious for a shorter route to the railway station. Some years ago they had a private path but this was closed; a shorter route, known as Coulson's Path, was also taken away and passengers have to go by the Devonshire Road. The erection of one of the old foot bridges, now lying useless, somewhere near Charles Street or David Street would be a boon to both railway and inhabitants – S. Hurrell. 05 09 06

1905 09 26

Ely train smash, p3 *

1905 10 03

A gruesome discovery was made near the G.E.R. station of Black Bank, a few miles past Ely. On the railway line was found the trunk of a man's body, and some feet away the head which had evidently been severed by a passing train. The body has been identified as a publican of Little Downham who was formerly in the Militia Band at Ely. 05 10 03

1905 12 09

Cambridge Corporation's new Mill Road storeyard is nearing completion on land behind the Free Library. Here material for the repair and making of roads is stored, vehicles housed and mended and appliances for any contingency kept in readiness. It has a siding to the railway for granite or cement, an open shed for refuse vehicles and stables together with accommodation for two steam rollers. There are blacksmiths, carpenters and wheelwright's shops and a men's mess room 05 12 09a & b

1906 01 02

A Kirtling man was remanded at Newmarket police court, charged with the murder of his wife. A number of persons waited on the platform at the railway station in the hope of seeing the prisoner alight from the Cambridge train, but they were doomed to disappointment. He was conveyed by road in a two-horse conveyance but not a glimpse could be caught as it was driven into the yard at the rear of the police station. 06 01 02

1906 03 09

A boy from Prickwillow was summoned for placing a sleeper on the railway line. He'd left Cole's farm and walked along the wire fence till he came to Palmer's crossing and went to Fryart's about a piece of bicycle, passing a pile of sleepers. Police found footprints of boots which were nailed peculiarly; these matched those the lad was wearing. He said "I did it for a lark. Don't lock me up, please". 06 03 09

1906 03 16

Prickwillow train wrecking, p3

1906 04 07

A serious accident occurred on the Great Eastern Railway at Shippea Hill station. The engine attached to the Norwich-London express jumped the line, the coach following reared up on end and fell down the bank into the ditch, breaking the telegraph wires. The second coach was hurled down the bank on the opposite side and the third, fourth and fifth coaches left the lines. Three passengers were injured, two seriously, but all had a miraculous escape from death. The line was completely blocked and a breakdown gang was speedily conveyed to restore communication. The passengers were sent on by special train 06 04 07b

1906 04 09

Shippea Hill train crash 06 04 09a

1906 04 18

An alarming railway accident occurred at Ramsey on the branch line to Holme. A train of four coaches, full of people, did not pull up as usual but ran past the platform at a speed of 20 mph. Against the buffer stop there were two horse boxes and with a terrific impact, heard a mile off, the train dashed into them. The engine was damaged but the coaches were not derailed though the passengers were terribly shaken. 06 04 18a

1906 06 04

A Government Inspector's report into the derailment of a passenger train near Shippea Hill on April 7th concluded it was caused by unduly high speed over a portion of track under repair. At Cambridge Assizes a 15-year old boy from Prickwillow was indicted for having placed a sleeper on the railway line near Ely on the evening of March 6th. It was hit by the Norwich train and carried for a mile and a quarter 06 06 04b, 06 06 04c, d

1906 08 09

Cambridge station platform will be lengthened by 270 feet and widened with new awnings. The booking hall will be enlarged nearly three times, the waiting room, lavatories and parcels office doubled. A subway connecting the eastern side of the line with the town would be a convenience but only a small proportion of those people using it would be railway passengers. However the railway would allow a wayleave under their line to anybody who wishes to construct one. 06 08 09

1906 08 23

A woman of about 30 years of age journeyed to Cambridge to meet the man who was the author of her 'trouble'. While she was in the train alone the child was born but on arrival at the station she behaved with such extraordinary circumspection that none of the railway officials suspected anything unusual had occurred. Carrying a bundle wrapped in underlinen under her arm, this extraordinary woman walked the length of the platform, hailed a cab and asked to be driven to the Workhouse. There her strength gave way and she swooned on the floor with the new-born babe beside her. They are both doing well. 06 08 23

1906 09 13

Ely Coroner held an inquest at the residence of Mr Hanslip Long, Shippea Hill into the death of a widow who was knocked down and killed at Shippea Crossing. She had been to the Fish and Duck where she paid for her husband's harvest beer. On returning she saw the train but started to go over the crossing at a tidy stroke and was hit. It was getting dark and they had to strike three matches before they could recognise the body. She was a strong-minded woman and it was difficult to persuade that class of people to do what other people wanted. 06 09 13a

1906 10 13

Railway fraud, p4

1906 11 24

The Motor Van, Wagon and Omnibus Users Association is to test the legality of the Great Eastern Railway Company in putting up notices on a number of bridges over the Cambridge and Mildenhall line prohibiting heavy motor vehicles from passing over them. This would close a large tract of country to such traffic. Engineers say the bridges are strong enough but have been allowed to get into a state of disrepair. 06 11 24b

1906 12 08

Sir – on Cambridgeshire roads with little traffic level crossings gates are apt to be kept closed permanently and only opened on request. For the sake of bicycles there are generally little wicket-gates designed by some ingenious person with the object of making it as difficult as possible to get a bicycle through. The custodians of the crossing will generally open the main gates, with some

grumbling, if one insists but this is a gross infringement of the rights of the public by a private corporation – A.C. Benson, Magdalene College 06 12 08

1907 01 03

A signalman at Cherry Hinton signal box experienced the agony of seeing his son killed before his eyes. While he was on duty his three-year-old lad toddled across the line to visit his father, just as a passenger train was approaching. Unable to leave his post and unable to prevent the accident, the father saw his son knocked down by the train. He was picked up, shockingly injured, and conveyed by the train to Cambridge station and from thence to Hospital but was dead before he arrived 07 01 03b

1907 03 22

Exciting scenes were witnessed at Shelford where two cottages close by the railway line were gutted. The discovery synchronised with the passing of the G.E.R. express and it is thought a spark from the engine alighted upon the thatched roof. In the absence of any fire appliance helpers concentrated on removing the furniture and every article, with the exception of the iron bedsteads, was carried to a place of safety. 07 03 22

1907 04 20

Small boats are affected by the wash from craft propelled by steam or motor power. But too much restriction would hamper commercial craft so seriously as to drive them from the river altogether, considerably reducing the revenue of the Cam Conservancy. Now that the carriage of goods has transferred more to the railway the river is increasingly used by recreative boaters who should pay more 07 04 20a

1907 07 03

An inquest was held at the Anchor Inn, Prickwillow on the body of an eight-year old girl knocked down and killed by a train at the Mile-End crossing on her way home from school. Thirty schoolchildren used the crossing every day and to secure their safety automatic locking of the gates should be resorted to. But this would create a greater danger than at present. 07 07 03

1907 07 08

Sir – I should much like to live in Cambridge but am unable to do so because of its trains. If I could get to London before nine in the morning and return after 10.30 at night I could do so. There are numbers of commercial travellers and tradesmen who have to go to market who would live here and patronise whichever railway company gives this facility first. A route via Bedford would only take some 20 minutes longer and would be a great benefit. – Effigy. Two years ago the railway asked for the names of 10 people who would be regular passengers – but no names were forthcoming - Editor 07 07 08

1907 07 19

The newly-ennobled Lord Peckover received a very cordial reception on his return to Wisbech. The engine of the train was decorated with flags and he was received at the station by the Mayor and Corporation, Fire Brigade and Salvation Army Band. His route to the North Brink was gaily decorated with two large arches bearing the words 'Welcome'. 07 07 19a

1907 07 20

For some years the manufacture of Portland cement had been carried on in the district, but it is today that the new Saxon Portland Company is seriously undertaking the scientific manufacture of the product on a large commercial scale. One of the largest and most modern cement works in the kingdom is being erected on the Coldham Lane, Cambridge. Sidings have been connected with the railway capable of holding three trains of 20 trucks each. The buildings, rapidly approaching completion, include eight large cement kilns & an enormous building will provide storage for the manufactured cement. The works will be open by night and by day. The electric light will be extensively used and the current will be generated at the works.

1907 08 12

The Rev Walker was exploring the railway station at Lord's Bridge where he opened a small tumulus in which he found a stone coffin containing a human skeleton and the bones of a dog. There was no lid to the coffin and the bones had been forced in by the aid of big stones. Most were broken with the head in the middle. One theory is that he might have been killed by a chariot. At Barrington hundreds of skeletons have been discovered with spears and swords, but none in a coffin. 07 08 12

1907 08 28

An RSPCA Inspector saw a box of wild birds in the booking office at Isleham railway station addressed to a man in Islington. He found it contained a number of goldfinches together with some linnets, their wings fluttered through the side of the box. A birdcatcher of The Pits, Isleham claimed they were chaffinches. A linnet or chaffinch was worth fourpence while a goldfinch, newly caught, was worth about a shilling. Goldfinches had been sold for up to 30 shillings, but that was only after they'd been taught. 07 08 28 a & b

1907 09 07

One hundred years ago all kinds of goods from furniture to cheese were sold at Stourbridge Fair. But it is now only a shadow of what it used to be. When the Mayor proclaimed it on 4th September the only sign of anything unusual was one solitary gipsy brush van. It continues until October 16th but only about the 26th does anything in the nature of a fair take place. The railway has probably had more than anything to do with the dying out of these ancient marts. 07 09 07c

1907 09 14

General Sir John French and 80 army officers arrived in Cambridge by special train with 27 cars containing Army Motor Reserve officers joining them at Trinity College from all parts of the country. They are part of the 'Blue' army, a Continental power capable of mobilising three million troops, which has landed on the East coast after 'Redland' – the UK – lost command of the sea. The exercise is designed to give the higher commanders an opportunity of considering the strategical problems and working out tactics. 07 09 14

1907 10 19

The public telephone, placed at a railway station, in a shop or hotel is one of the cheapest and most useful of modern conveniences. The telephoned message is far quicker than the telegram and there are over 500,000 telephones in the country. The National Telephone Company has already established over 7,800 'call offices' so one is seldom out of sight of one of the familiar public telephone signs. 07 10 19

1907 12 07

When the Cambridge station Night Inspector heard of a fire at Bishops Stortford he despatched telegrams summoning workers from their homes. A truck specially designed for the conveyance of the fire engine is always kept ready but the engine itself is kept unmounted, ready for local fires. Within an hour a special train comprising a locomotive, the fire-emergency truck and a brake van was thundering down the line as, on board, a little band of half-a-dozen men busied themselves with preparations for the grim contest that lay before them. - 07 12 07

1907 12 27

Upon Christmas Eve an inquiry was held into the sad circumstances of the death of an engine driver in the employ of the Midland Railway Company. A family man who lived at Kettering, he was instantaneously killed by a passing train at Histon Station as he was about to be relieved from duty. About half the train passed over the body and his scalp was cut clean off - 07 12 27a

1908 01 10

Hundreds of London skating enthusiasts availed themselves of train excursions to the fens which presented a practically unlimited area of ice in good conditions. Miles and miles were available. Not since 1895 have Cambridge people had such a large extent of frozen river with a splendid run from

the Railway Bridge to Baitsbite Locks. Even man's modern eyesores were transformed: telegraph and telephone poles were linked with strands of silken beauty and wire-netting was outlined in crystals with the fragile delicacy of old lace. 08 01 10 f & g

1908 04 11

Her Majesty the Queen, accompanied by the Dowager Empress of Russia, passed through Cambridge station, where a small group of spectators had gathered. Elaborate arrangements had been taken and Inspector Baker and several constables were in attendance, in addition to the Station Master and other officials. There was no demonstration but a kindly act on the part of the Queen was noticed: she waved her hand once or twice to the persons on the platform as the train proceeded without stopping to Six Mile Bottom. 08 04 11

1908 05 06

The King motored from Bucking Palace to St Pancras and left by the 5.7 train for Newmarket. A special saloon had been attached for his use and tea was already laid. At Cambridge the Royal saloon was detached and was run as a special to Newmarket which was reached shortly before seven. His Majesty subsequently motored to Moulton Paddocks and dined with Sir Edward Cassell. He will motor back on Friday. 08 05 06a

1908 07 17

A shocking railway accident, resulting fatally, occurred at the Cherry Hinton level crossing. Two light engines were approaching and the gatekeeper, Mr West, being absent at the back of his house, his daughter was closing the gates. One easily shut but before she had time to close the second the engines were upon her and she was thrown to the ground. The unclosed gate was badly damaged. The gatekeeper was 71 years of age and on duty all hours. For the last four weeks he had been called at four o'clock in the morning and was on duty till 10.30 pm. CWN 08 07 17 p5

1908 08 21

An Isleham bird catcher caught 12 goldfinches which he kept in his kitchen. Most died but he sent three to the railway station in a box labelled 'Birds with care'. These were seized by an RSPCA inspector and released. Now he claimed damages for the loss of income. The judge said the goldfinches were like bees and belonged to their captor. He was awarded £1.10s. CWN 08 08 21 p3

1908 09 04

During the past few days several well-known people have passed away at Soham. Ebenezer Taylor, cab proprietor, died at the advanced age of 78. He was in business for over 40 years & before the opening of the Ely and Newmarket railway line, 28 years ago, the supply of vehicles and horses was much more important than at the present time. Fyson Johnson, blacksmith, was in his 67th year, Martin Bradshaw, bricklayer was 73, and both were trustees of the Wesleyan Chapel. This succession of deaths has cast quite a gloom over the town. CWN 08 09 04 p8

1908 09 18

There will be considerable reorganisation at Cambridge station following the agreement between the London and North Western and the Midland Railways. There will now be a combined staff for goods, cartage and passenger traffic and one town office will do the business of the two. But passengers taking ordinary tickets to London by the Great Eastern Railway still have the privilege of returning by the Great Northern, or vice versa. CWN 08 09 18

1909 10 22

Shoppers had the unusual opportunity of seeing an aeroplane in the streets of Cambridge. It was an all-British monoplane invented and designed by Jack Humphreys, founder of the British Aeroplane Syndicate and one-time Cambridge resident. He had worked day and night at Wivenhoe to get the machine ready for the Blackpool meeting and had hoped to put it on the train there. Instead he had it towed to Cambridge but missed the turning at Station Road and had to drive through the narrow

central streets until he could get back. A crowd of railway officials, crossing-sweepers and daintily-dressed ladies quickly clustered around it. CWN 09 10 22

1908 09 11

Stonea station railway accident – 08 09 11 p8

1908 10 09

After many years of waiting, Thaxted is at last assured of its railway. The history of the Elsenham, Thaxted and Bardfield light railway scheme is a very long one but in 1907 an Act of Parliament was obtained and now the Great Eastern Railway has agreed to construct the line. A platform will probably be erected at Henham and a siding for goods at Sibley. Thaxted is a delightfully sleepy old English town; many of its inhabitants are said to have never seen a train and some disbelieve in the existence of such means of locomotion. But soon this peaceful spot will receive the rough jolt of advancing commercialisation. CWN 08 10 09 p3

1908 10 30

Newmarket's new railway station is the smartest and most up-to-date in the kingdom, the pride of the inhabitants and the envy of all visitors. It was opened in 1902 replete with every convenience, electric light and commodious refreshment rooms. On Cesarewitch day 1,032 first and 1,656 third-class passengers left by the return specials alone. In striking contrast Cambridge station is dismal and dirty. CWN 08 10 30 p5

1908 12 04

Cambridge railway station article from Railway Magazine – 08 12 04

1909 01 22

The line near Cambridge station was blocked by a collision between two goods trains. One engine and four trucks were derailed and the goods thrown in all directions. One was completely overturned and its contents scattered over the line while others loaded with granite had the sides ripped open. The accident happened under Mill Road Bridge where a crowd of spectators watched the arduous task of clearing the line. 09 01 22

1909 04 02

Improvement work has started at Cambridge railway station to provide better facilities for branch trains. But other work to enlarge the booking, parcel and lavatory accommodation, to widen the main platform by twelve feet, provide another exit for parcel traffic and erect another colonnade in the yard is a task of considerable magnitude and will not be undertaken at once. 09 04 02

1909 05 28

A shocking accident occurred at Cambridge Railway Station when George Meade of Shepreth fell in front of an engine and received such injuries as necessitated the amputation of both his legs. It was fully twenty minutes before he could be extricated and removed to Addenbrooke's Hospital. 09 05 28

1909 07 30

Before last June newspapers were received in Swavesey through the railway or by post. They had to be fetched from the station or came by the midday delivery and few people indulged in the luxury of a daily paper. Then W.F. Gleaves of High Street became agent for the 'Daily Mail' and later supplied all newspapers. Daily papers are now delivered immediately after receipt by the 8.25 train and certain London dailies arrive earlier. Under the old arrangement postal or railway charges had to be added to the cost of the paper. Now even in Elsworth, six miles distant, papers are delivered for face value. CWN 09 07 30

1909 09 17

After leading an irregular life for years and having no settled place of abode, an agricultural labourer known as 'Lurcher' came to an untimely end. There were no relatives to identify the body but Aaron

Hobbs from Lt Downham, who was an agricultural labourer until he had both feet cut off on the railway, said the deceased was about 32 and 'pretty good for drink at any time' who only worked when he liked. He'd been rather a 'rum' character all his life. CWN 09 09 17

1909 11 12

An exciting incident occurred at the Mill Drove Railway Crossing near Soham. Charles Aspland was coming from his farm bringing a portable horse-drawn hen house filled with young fowls which had been turned out some days on a corn field. One of its wheels got jammed between the railway line and the wooden floor of the crossing and try as he would he could not get it free. Suddenly the Newmarket special train with racehorses for Liverpool dashed into the henhouse splintering it across the line and killing 35 of the fowls. The engine sustained no damage whatsoever. CWN 09 11 12

1909 12 10

Sir – At one time there were 50 basket makers at work in Ely, today there are not more than 20. The sight of trolley loads of baskets being taken to the railway station for transit away has become a rarity. Many makers are now employed at butchering, cow keeping, chimney sweeping or on the railway. Recently an Ely basket maker went to London for orders and could have had an order for 300 baskets but for the fact that he could not compete with the foreign price – Walter Kirton, Ely. CWN 09 12 10

1909 12 31

A labourer and a French polisher of no fixed abode, were charged with travelling on the train from Newmarket to Cambridge without having previously paid their fare. The facts were stated by Ticket Collector G.E. Sanders and P.C. Evans of the G.E.R. police. They pleaded guilty and were fined five shillings, in default seven days in prison. They went to prison. CWN 09 12 31

1910 01 14

The annual dinner of the Saxon Cement Works, the Norman Cement Works and the Atlas Stone Company took place at the Lion Hotel, Petty Cury. The cement industry was important for Cambridge. They had started with 128 men, today they employ over 300 with a permanent staff of 70 clerks and supervisors. They'd spent over £150,000 in coal and coke, another £150,000 in materials from machinery to stationery. Close on £200,000 had paid in wages, most in Cambridge, and the railway companies had received more than £300,000 over the last seven years. CWN 10 01 14i & j

1910 01 14

An inquest was held after the body of a Witchford shepherd was discovered on the Barway railway sidings with both legs cut off. It would appear that two trains must have passed over the unfortunate man, the driver of the second one having seen the body when it was too late to stop. He was still alive when picked up but died shortly afterwards. A verdict of accidental death was returned. The swearing of the jury by the new form of oath, each man being sworn separately, was a somewhat lengthy process, occupying nearly ten minutes. CWN 10 01 14l

1910 02 25

A shocking fatality occurred near Sturmer railway station when a hawker from Haverhill was decapitated on the line. His head had been completely severed from the body and a scarf was picked up some fifty yards from the place where the fatality occurred. It seems he was knocked down by the 5.28 train from Haverhill, portions of the head and hair being found on that train. 10 01 28h
The high ground near Cherry Hinton was the scene of some interesting military operations. For several hours the Gogs resounded with the crackle of rifle fire and the thunder of artillery as the tide of battle rolled slowly from Reservoir Hill past the Golf Links until arrested at Limepit Hill. The operations supposed that the Great Eastern Railway line was the frontier between two states which had mobilised their troops. A cavalry brigade at Newmarket was reinforced by some infantry and guns and Fulbourn was fortified. 10 02 25m & n

1910 03 25

Two London youths were charged with stealing and receiving cycles. A clerk in the booking office at Shelford station said one lad had come in with a cycle which he had sent to London by the 2.14 train. It had been collected from St Pancras station next morning and taken to a pawnbroker who was suspicious and informed a detective. The lad confessed: "Me and Wilson went to Cambridge on Saturday and stole two. We rode over to Shelford and booked them to London then walked back to Cambridge and I got another one" 10 03 25c

1910 04 01

There was an accident at Dullingham Station when some wagons jumped the rails. Three timber trucks were thrown over and three cattle trucks overturned. Breakdown gangs were summoned and the up line was cleared in three-and-a-half hours. A number of sleepers, and chairs were smashed but these could be quickly replaced. The difficulty was to get rid of the overturned waggons before the down line could open. The Newmarket stationmaster sent passenger trains to Fordham and thence by the Quay and Swaffham line to Cambridge. 10 04 01

1910 04 01

Easter 1910 will be long remembered for its delightful holiday weather. The religious services both on Friday and Sunday were remarkably well attended and on Friday evening a large audience attended a performance of the 'Messiah' at the Guildhall. Many Cambridge people went out of town by train. Yarmouth, Lowestoft and Cromer were the most popular watering places, Hunstanton attracting fewer people than usual. There were scores of cyclists and motorists on the roads, all very cheerful in spite of the dust nuisance. The Territorials held a parade for 250 men and the 1st Eastern General Hospital were busy training at Haslingfield. A miniature rifle range was opened at the Working Men's Institute in Fitzroy Street. 10 04 01a

1910 05 27

Col Theodore Roosevelt, ex-President of the United States of America, was awarded an Honorary Degree in the Senate House. He arrived by train from London and was driven to Pembroke Lodge where he lunched with the Vice-Chancellor and 100 friends. Afterwards he was made an Honorary Member of the Union Society. Only Oliver Wendell Holmes, Lord Kitchen and Mr Waterhouse, the architect of the Union building had received this honour before him. The whole visit was very quietly carried out owing to the death of King Edward VII 10 05 27a

1910 06 24

Some interesting relics were discovered while digging material for the new bridge over the River Ouse near the railway station at Ely. Twelve feet down a number of trees were found lying in a horizontal position, as if they had drifted down in time of flood. Remains of a horse and shells of fresh-water crustaceans were also found. Nearby Babylon, or 'Babblin' as local people call it, is covered with the debris of ancient potteries dating from the 15th to 18th centuries. The family of Merry have lived on this island for centuries and the present members are full of interesting information. 10 06 24d

1910 06 24

Swavesey accident with tricycle on railway, death of nurse Mary Edwards – 10 06 24h

1910 08 12

A party of excursionists left a Cambridgeshire village last Thursday morning for a day at Yarmouth. The sun shone brightly and everyone had a very happy day by the sea. At last the time came to start for home. On arriving at the railway station it was found that four of the party were missing. Just as the train was starting two appeared and were pushed by the guard into a carriage but the other two – elderly ladies – were left behind. They came on by a later train and arrived at their destination on Friday morning, having spent the night in Cambridge station. They were none the worse for their adventure. 10 08 12b

1910 09 16

The past week has been marked by an unusual number of fatalities. At Huntingdon a poor woman in a fit of insanity cut the throat of her infant child and then committed suicide. At Littleport a little girl of six years of age was run over by a farm cart and killed. A Stansted carpenter was knocked down by an express train and the body of a St Ives man was found in the river at Huntingdon. The Over mail cart driver blew his nose and immediately fell to the ground dead, probably caused by the rupturing of a blood vessel in the brain 10 09 16c

1910 09 16

A customer who ordered half a ton of coal from an Over coal merchant was much surprised when he arrived at his premises dragging a cart containing the fuel. He sympathetically remarked "I'd only have had a couple of hundred had I known you'd no horse". But the merchant replied he did not trouble to put his horse in for such a trifle as half a ton and that were it not for Over hill he could have drawn all of his coal himself from Swavesey railway station. 10 09 16e

1910 09 23

Swavesey people have reason to complain of the carelessness displayed by the men in charge of the traction engine and three huge trucks used to convey granite from the station for use on the county council roads. On several occasions the main road has been strewn with granite dropped from the trucks. The engine with its heavy train shakes the houses in an alarming way. When they come through after nine in the evening babies and early bed-goers have been roused from their sleep and the domestic peace disturbed. Horse and carts did not damage the roads like the engine does and gave employment to local men. 10 09 23f

1910 10 28

Cambridge station railway worker decapitated by train – 10 10 28d

1910 11 11

An undergraduate was fined for assaulting a policeman on Guy Fawkes Night. A considerable amount of damage had been done, hoarding demolished, gas lamps broken, the railway station raided and milk churns overturned. The most serious incident occurred at Jesus Sluice footbridge where a battle royal took place between members of the County Constabulary and a large party of undergraduates and town roughs. They stoned the police, all of whom were hit, and PC Johnson was struck on the forehead by a piece of board and rendered unconscious. Only the arrival of police reinforcements had averted further trouble. 10 11 11 & a # c.39

1910 12 09

All the low-lying land around Swavesey is under water. The roadway is completely submerged at the Swan Pond and foot passengers have to use the raised causeway, the gate openings in which are spanned by temporary bridges. Mr. J. Barnett, dealer of Fenstanton, came to grief when crossing with a horse and cart. One wheel sunk into the recently filled-in trench and became embedded for some time. Previously a cow had sunk in the soft soil near the same place and was with great difficulty dragged out. 10 12 09d

1910 12 23

The railway line to St Ives has been carefully watched by gangs of men armed with flag. The floods in Huntingdonshire are the worst for thirty years. The main road between Offord and Buckden was impassable and the Great North Road near Alconbury covered with two feet of water, entirely stopping motor car traffic. At St Ives water overflowed into the streets and backed up through the drains. The stabling at the White Horse Hotel yard was submerged and a motor car placed in a lock-up shed was found in a foot of water. The 38 houses on Victoria Terrace and along the London Road were cut off while the railway at Fen Drayton level crossing was inundated, trains having to proceed at a very cautious pace. 10 12 23c

1911 03 31

Lt Abington annual parish meeting was distinctly breezy. Last year the meeting was held in the school when the lighting arrangements were inadequate: there were no lamps and the parishioners had to see as best they could with the aid of two or three diminutive candles. This year it was the Mission Hall but the Vicar objected and the chairman threatened to call in the policeman to eject him. Reference was made to the excessive speed of motor cars through the village. The disused railway line from Gt Chesterford to Six Mile Bottom should be made into a motor track. 11 03 31g

1911 04 28

Train fatality at Clare station – 11 04 28a

1911 07 21

Everyone concerned is to be congratulated on the construction of a light railway to link up the old-world Essex town of Thaxted with the Great Eastern system at Elsenham. It is 15 years since the project was mooted and now the first sod has been cut. The difficulties have been great: land was difficult to obtain and it was not easy to raise the money for a scheme which does not present the likelihood of profit. But the Treasury considered it would tend to the development of agriculture and made a substantial grant. Now the long-cherished dream is almost an accomplished fact 11 07 21b

1911 08 04

The Great Eastern Railway says that despite the increase in motor travelling, which renders wealthy people independent of railway trains, the first-class returns show a considerable increase. The third-class returns are also up which is more surprising for the development of tubes and trams in the London suburbs means keen competition. But the second-class passenger seems to be gradually dying out and on many lines has been abolished altogether 11 08 04

1911 08 11

Horse killed at railway crossing Mow Fen Swavesey – 11 08 11f

1911 08 18

The railway strike has begun and its effects are impossible to say. A complete stoppage would paralyse the trade of the country. Meat would be unobtainable and flour and corn exhausted in a week leaving cities starving for bread. No doubt road and river traction would bring some mitigation but fruit and fish would leap to famine prices and without coal no gas or electricity can be produced. Mills, factories and workshops would be closed down for lack of power and the great majority of people become dependent upon public relief. 11 08 18e

1911 08 18

The effects of the rail strike are not seriously felt in Cambridge. All trains are running though supplies are considerably delayed with shortages in butter, bacon and petrol. Representatives of the Amalgamated Society of Railway Servants have been in town but only a very few local employees are society men. Cambridge Station is looked upon as a 'fat job'; guards, porters and platform hands know when they are well off and there are plenty of reserve men to take the places of any who come out. 11 08 18h

1911 08 25

Had the railway strike not been settled on Saturday there is little doubt that nearly 100 of the men employed at Cambridge station would have come out. The GER trains ran as usual and the London and North-Western Railway will give double pay to the men connected with the movement and handling of traffic who have remained loyally at their posts. Although no actual disturbances were feared the Chief Constable very properly took the precaution of stopping all leave in case of need. 11 08 25f

1911 11 03

The Cambridge stationmaster, Mr Holdich, was presented with a gold watch and a cheque for 100 guineas on his retirement. When he'd started with the Eastern Counties Railway in the 1850s the

rolling stock was in a wretched state. He'd ridden in a carriage with no roof, others had a roof but no windows. In 1894 he'd been appointed to Cambridge, dealing with Masters of Colleges, learned Professors, royalty and other distinguished personages. Then there was the Royal Show. But they'd got through all right. 11 11 03d

1911 11 24

John Stanley, poulterer of Peas Hill sued the G.E.R. Company for damages sustained in the carriage of 84 ducklings and three geese from Liverpool Street to Cambridge. They were to have been sent by passenger train the same day. But instead they were taken on to Doncaster. He made numerous inquiries but it was not until 9pm that the birds arrived at the station but the GER could not deliver them until Monday, by which time they would have been bad. But he had an old contract that said the goods were sent at his risk and he lost his case. 11 11 24f

1911 12 22

William Macfarlane-Grieve of Impington Park sued the Great Eastern Railway over trees and shrubs which were destroyed by fire caused by sparks or cinders from locomotive engines used on the railway at Histon. During the abnormally dry season the plantations had been set alight eight or nine times. He had seen a train pulled by a red Midland engine, number 134. Directly it passed a fire broke out and he'd picked up cinders from the engine. He was awarded damages. It was the first action under the Railway Fires Act passed in 1905. 11 12 22b

1912 02 02

Dilley, Son & Read held their horse repository sale at St Ives when 130 animals came under the hammer. Judging now commences with the harness horses at 10 o'clock, the vanners and cart horses follow in order and the sale begins half an hour earlier. This alteration proved successful: the sale was well over in time for the buyers to get their horses loaded up by the two o'clock trains, getting the animals home that same afternoon. There was a large attendance and prices were most satisfactory 12 02 02j

1912 02 16

The biggest fire seen in Cambridge for nine years broke out at Clement Johnson's rope, sack and tarpaulin factory facing the railway station. The building was completely gutted. The walls which must have been very strongly built when the factory was erected nearly 50 years ago, remained intact, but everything inside - sacks, ropes, twine, tarpaulins and marquees - was totally destroyed. Mr Johnson knew nothing about the catastrophe until he left a train and walked out of the station when he saw the whole factory ablaze 12 02 16f & 16a

1912 03 01

A slight mishap occurred at the Milton level crossing when the down gate was smashed by the 6.05 pm train from Cambridge to St Ives. Beyond the smashing of the gate and some slight damage to the brakes, due probably to the sudden stopping of the train, no damage was done. Immediately before this Chivers' work-girls train had passed on the up line. The gateman said that earlier he had let through some sheep and the gates were securely fastened. But the down gate became opened in some way and was run into by the train. This is the fourth accident at this crossing in the last three years. 12 03 01f

1912 03 15

Coal strike – local railway services – 12 03 15g

1912 03 29

Soham railway station master G.F. Vipian dies – 12 03 29i

1912 06 07

When retiring Stationmaster, George Kimm, first came to Cambridge the Superintendent's office was on the old island platform that stood opposite the present platform before it was lengthened. There

was a bridge by which passengers reached it but all luggage was transferred by means of a trolley and then shouldered by porters to a cab or van for conveyance to its destination. This caused very great delay, especially at the beginning or end of term, and it was largely for the convenience of the University that the present long single platform was made. It was opened in October 1863. He has seen the opening of the Haverhill and Sudbury line amongst others, welcomed Royalty. Stretham fen accident described: the balance-weight of the engine of an express train fell off just as a down express was approaching, and, the weight rolling on to the line, threw the down train into the dyke. A number of people were injured. Litigation followed and the company were found liable 12 06 07k

1912 06 07

Chatteris Urban Council has decided that the houses in the town should be numbered and have already issued notices requesting the occupiers to number their properties. It is a very desirable improvement as great confusion is caused, especially where people of the same surname (of which there are many) live in the same street. The town was very quiet recently as the Great Eastern Railway Company ran a special cheap day trip from Chatteris station to London and back for the Derby. This being the half-holiday day several shops took the opportunity of closing for the whole of the day 12 06 07l

1912 07 19

An important change in railway administration means that the whole of the G.E.R. and G.N.R. work at Cambridge station will now be carried out by the Great Eastern staff. All passengers will obtain their tickets in the central booking hall while all parcel traffic will now be dealt with in the former Great Northern booking hall which will provide cloak room accommodation as well. A total of 50 G.N.R. men will be found new employment, some as far away as Doncaster or St Neots. 12 06 28i
Histon railway station improvements – 12 07 19k

1912 09 13

The station master at Old North Road, Bourn told the court the defendant was in the habit of sending poultry by the railway to other stations. The man had left a box containing seven fowls that the stationmaster considered too small, so he'd transferred them into a larger box. Next day the man and his wife had visited and become abusive, striking him with a stick. There was a scuffle during which his shirt was torn before defendant was put out of the office. The accused, who is very deaf, strongly denied the charges in stentorian tones and owing to his excitable temperament had to be frequently restrained by his wife. When found guilty he refused to pay the fine 12 09 13d & e

1912 10 18

A platelayer laying fog signals on the railway line near Creswell's Bridge, Ely, was knocked down by a light engine and instantly killed. At the time there was patchy fog. A train driver said he had passed the bridge travelling at 35 mph but had not noticed anything. However when he arrived at Peterborough the engine was examined and there were traces of blood on the back of the left-hand side buffer beam and along the engine frame. The man was not deaf, was not drunk but may not have heard the engine, which was very quiet. A verdict of 'Accidental Death' was recorded 12 10 18 & a

1912 11 01

A tragic and dramatic occurrence took place at a funeral at Over. On the way to the church one of the bearers suddenly fell to the ground, dropping the corner of the coffin. Thinking he had only fainted the procession continued on the way to the church, one or two friends remaining behind to render what aid they could. However the man never regained consciousness and died within a few minutes. A platelayer on the Great Eastern Railway, he was always thought to be a strong man of perfect health. No inquest is to be held, Dr Ellis of Swavesey having certified that death was due to heart failure 12 11 01

1912 11 08

The Great Eastern Railway Company accomplished great work during the army manoeuvres running 200 trains to move troops, horses and guns. An engine in steam with an accident van and steam crane

was made ready, carpenters prepared to perform any services and the edges of all platforms were whitened with lime. No less than 45 type-written special train notices had to be prepared involving the reproduction of many thousand copies by means of hand rotary machines. Blue paper was used for the inward travel and yellow for the outward. All this without interfering with ordinary passenger traffic
12 11 08

1912 12 20

A conference on rural housing was told that were a number of corporate landowners doing their duty by providing cottages on their estates but others were not doing so well. There was not a single college which would not bring its property up to the proper standard if the difficulties were brought before them. The railway companies did not provide houses in anything like the same proportion as they introduced labour into the rural districts. Some village charities owned houses which were unsuitable for human habitation. But they could not afford to forego the rents and they could not borrow money for repairs. So they had to go on getting all they could for them. 12 12 20

1913 01 03

Railway collision. The members of the company who are appearing in pantomime at the New Theatre had a narrow escape whilst travelling from Wolverhampton to Cambridge. Whilst the theatrical special was at a standstill, a passenger train ran into it from behind, but fortunately no life was lost. Mr Milton Bode's Company, consisting of about 50 actors and actresses was, fortunately in the front of the train and beyond severe shocks, escaped without injury. Also travelling was the 'Wild Australia' Company including eight horses and a number of snakes and alligators. When the actors scrambled from the train they were mixed up with a giant python and an alligator that had escaped from their boxes 13 01 03b

1913 01 31

The wife of the level crossing gate keeper at Mile End, Prickwillow told the inquest that when a train left from Shippea Hill station, a bell rang in the cottage. It was a very distinct ring. The gates were both closed and nobody had the right to open them unless they called her. John Mead, G.E.R. engine driver on the express from Norwich, said as he approached the crossing he saw a horse's head coming on the railway. He sounded the whistle and no sooner had he done so than the engine struck the horse, travelling at 60 mph. The collision had killed both the horse and the driver, leaving the cart standing but upsetting the coal with which it was laden. 13 01 31 p8 CIP

1913 01 31

Most of the passengers had left the G.N.R. train from King's Cross at Cambridge station when an official noticed a gentleman, apparently asleep. He opened the carriage door and gently shook him by the knee. As he did so he was startled to see a revolver lying on the floor of the carriage and a small trickle of blood. Examination showed that the passenger was dead, apparently from a bullet wound in the head. The body was identified as that of Longstanton man. The village stationmaster was told to break the news to his wife. The news caused great consternation in the area 13 01 31 p12 CIP

1913 01 31

The coroner reported he had already held three inquests occasioned by persons being killed by trains at the Mile End, Prickwillow crossing. The present mode of ringing of the bell on the gatekeeper's cottage as trains pass Shippea Hill station should continue and a red wooden arm, as on signals, should work automatically with the bell and be placed where it can be plainly seen by persons using the crossing. A similar system should apply when trains pass Ely northern signal-box – 13 01 31 p11 CIP

1913 02 07

Suicide of Longstanton man on train 13 02 07 p8 CIP.

1913 03 28

A Haverhill boy fell from a train at Hedingham railway station and was killed instantly. The train was packed with football enthusiasts returning from a match at Haverhill. The carriage contained 15 grown ups, there was no larking at all and only a little singing and talk about football. The lad stood by the door which suddenly flew open. Cecil Candler tried to catch him as he fell, but he was gone too far. The communication chord was pulled but the train went a long way before it pulled up. An inspection showed that the lock was faulty. The door had come open twice before 13 03 28 p7 CIP

1913 03 28

ASLEF tea & meeting, rail strike

1913 04 04 CIP

The new light railway between Elsenham & Thaxted was officially opened. The line runs for 5½ miles with three stopping places, Sibley Station, Henham & Cutler's Green. In 1896 it was proposed that the line should go as far as Bardsfield but in 1906 it was decided to terminate at Thaxted. The GER undertook to find half the cost of construction if the Treasury provided the rest and landowners gave the land. There can be very limited revenue with the GER carrying farm and market garden produce cheaply and quickly to London.

1913 05 09

There was a huge increase in heavy motor traffic carrying goods that had previously gone by train. In prosperous Cambridge there were 26 heavy motor lorries, including the motor-'buses, and 21 motor drays. Most of their running was done on the county roads at a fairly high speed. It was important to have good roads, not only for the ordinary motor-cars but for the heavy commercial vehicles, because they helped to promote industry in various parts of the county, councillors were told. 13 05 09 p09 CIP

1913 05 11

Ely railwaymen meeting

1913 05 16

With the opening of the fruit picking season in the Wisbech district comes the migration from Soham of a large number of people who year by year visit the fields. No few than 34 left on Wednesday and others are leaving day by day. But the advent of hot weather has brought fires caused by sparks from railway engines igniting crops along the line from Soham to Ely; no fewer than five broke out on Sunday evening when half-an-acre of hay was burnt.

1913 06 20

Soham fires on railway, Barway

1913 08 15

Wicken parish want a railway siding near the bridge in Soham Field - Barway already had one. It was four miles to the station and would be a considerable advantage to farmers. There would be more goods traffic and much that went to Upware would go by rail. Despite recent fires a fire engine was out of the question. But Soham had purchased fire extinguishers which have out a stream of gas instead of water. They might get flames under control and prevent a serious outbreak. It might be possible to buy them by public subscription 13 08 15 p10

1913 09 12

Wicken proposed railway station sidings proceeding

1913 09 26 p7

Railway shed fire

1913 10 10

Wicken railway siding

1913 10 17

Parcel left on train, Soham

1913 10 24

Lt Downham Parish Council have hard footpaths for the children to get to St Owen's school; they had to cross the railway lines – about 40 feet wide – no less than four times a day. This was dangerous.

Wedding presents stolen on railway

1913 12 26

Concern was expressed about the petroleum tanks on the Great Eastern Railway Company's yard in Devonshire Road. If there were an explosion all the station would be blown down and Tenison Road as well. There had been great trepidation when Mr Clement Johnson's sack factory caught fire because of the danger of the wind blowing sparks towards the tanks. But the Inspector of Explosives had examined them and nothing short of wilful determination would set them alight. It was petroleum, not explosive oil gas. The tanks in the ground would not be affected even if a man lit a pipe whilst pumping it out from the tank 13 12 26 p3

1914 02 13

Lighters owned by West Norfolk Manure and Chemical Co had touched the lower sill at Baits Bite Lock. They were carrying about 42 tons but if this was reduced it would not be economical and they would abandon the river and take the materials by rail. The sills could not be lowered without putting in new doors. The uprights are practically decayed and the two ploughs are never used except in emergency. The keeper was fearful of opening the doors and if there were a flood the whole might go. Urgent repairs were needed, the Conservators heard – 14 02 13d

1914 02 06

Somersham railway accident – 14 02 06b

1914 03 06

Somersham railway line inquest – 14 03 06b

1914 05 01

The little child of Mr A.G. Prime had a narrow escape from death by drowning at Swavesey. His mother was wheeling the babe in a perambulator near Moor Fen Gatehouse and stopped to tie the bootlace of her small son who was walking beside her. The roadway sloped from the railway gates so she turned the perambulator crossways to prevent it running away. But a goods train passed and shook the carriage which ran into a deep ditch close by. The strap broke and the child fell out. Without a moment's hesitation Mrs Prime jumped into the mud and water to rescue her son 14 05 01a

1914 05 08

The Cam Conservators had written to the West Norfolk Chemical Company concerning damage done to the sills at the locks by their barges, owing to their bumping when heavy laden. The Company replied that if they lightened their barges to such an extent that they no longer bumped, it would become cheaper for them to transfer the residuals from the gasworks by rail, which would ruin the traffic on the Cam. They could not lighten the tugs, which were heavier than the barges. The barge Charles, which has been running on the Cam for more than 50 years, drew two inches more water than the present barges 14 05 08, b c

1914 06 04

Trains to Cambridge p5

1914 06 12

The field day and inspection of the Red Cross Voluntary Aid Detachments was held at Linton. At the station railway wagons or carriages were prepared as for the reception of the wounded and the waiting room was fitted up with half a dozen beds with a field kitchen in the goods yard. The platform in the goods shed became a ward for less serious cases and in a siding stood the carriages used for the stretchers containing the wounded. 1914 06 12 p4

1914 07 10

Red Cross Field Day: a hostile force had landed at Cromer and much fighting was taking place, forcing the First Eastern General Hospital, normally stationed here to transfer to Bedford. Wounded from a make-believe battle near Duxford ... were taken by field ambulances to a field hospital at Whittlesford Station where the platform was used for refreshment and for re-bandaging the less serious wounded. Temporary wards were erected in the station yard to be filled with the 'wounded', represented by Perse School Boy Scouts who arrived in railway goods van. 14 07 10

1914 07 10

Cambridge Voluntary Aid Detachments and Red Cross held an exercise at Newnham College. It assumed severe fighting had been going on in Norfolk and a large number of casualties had been sent to the First Eastern General Hospital. When another train load of wounded arrived they received orders to convert Sidgwick Hall into a temporary hospital where eleven beds were provided and patients were treated for crushed hands and fractured tibia. Other nurses were prepared splints and bandages and a septic ward was set up 14 07 10 p4

1914 07 31

Histon rail crossing repaired, footbridge wanted
Over Admiral Vernon landlord dies on train

1914 08 07

How Cambridge Mobilised. — Throughout the first two or three days of the week Cambridge residents experienced the feeling of tension which has been typical of the country. Large crowds of townspeople have assembled outside newspaper offices during the week, in order to learn the latest war news, and such anxiety has not been displayed since the dark days of the South African War. Until the early hours of Wednesday morning, large numbers of Cambridge people paraded the streets in the hope of hearing some news as to the reply of Germany to the British ultimatum, and when the intelligence of war with Germany became known, the tension of the previous few days was partially relieved. Late on Sunday, and early on Monday morning, Cambridge members of the Naval Reserve received notices calling upon them to report themselves at their respective headquarters. There was a large number of Naval Reservists in Cambridge, and the men immediately proceeded to Portsmouth, Chatham and other important naval centres. While the effect of the withdrawal of the naval men did not have so drastic an effect as the orders had in coast towns, it was rather surprising to find that in Cambridge there were so many ex-naval men and Marines who had settled down to landmen's work in the inland town. The calling up of the Army Reserve had an even wider operation, employees in colleges, railwaymen, policemen, postal officials, Vanmen, etc., abandoning their civil occupations at the call of the State. The railway station presented an animated scene, hundreds of Reservists arriving from all parts of the town and district and proceeding to their regimental headquarters. The local Staff officers of the Territorial Force also responded to the summons, and rejoined their regiments. # c.45.5 – 1914 08 07 CIPof

1914 08 14

Cambridge Yeomanry marched from the stores in Panton Street to the railway station where they loaded their baggage into luggage vans. A number of horses were requisitioned in the station yard, including a cab horse which was taken out of the cab, unharnessed, then placed in a horse van. A butcher's horse was handed over. A country trap came into the yard to convey sad tidings to three of the men that their father had died. It was impossible for them to return home and they had to remain with their comrades. Finally a special train including vans loaded with machine guns and ammunition pulled out while the crowd sang 'Rule Britannia' 14 08 14 p6

1914 09 04

The train with wounded from the front was delayed. Rooms on the Great Northern platform were converted into wards for serious cases before being taken to hospital. Outside a fleet of motor cars and tradesmen's vans converted to ambulances were ready to take the men to the First Eastern Hospital now at Trinity College. It was not easy to lift the badly-wounded men out of the carriages but stretchers were placed on luggage trolleys and wheeled slowly along the platform. There were tears in the eyes of onlookers 14 09 04 p7

1914 09 25

Wounded Soldiers. — About 200 wounded soldiers arrived in Cambridge in the early hours of Wednesday morning after a long and tiring journey by rail and sea from the front. There were comparatively few Cambridge people at the railway station when the special trains arrived, and with all possible speed under the circumstances the wounded men were conveyed to the East Anglian Divisional Hospital at Trinity College.
Soham train times

1914 09 25

Wounded Soldiers Return. About five weeks ago, thousands of British soldiers, summoned from all parts of the United Kingdom, were under canvas at Cambridge in readiness for departure to the Front. Their destination was unknown, and it was naturally surmised by the men that they would be going to Belgium. Yesterday afternoon some of these soldiers returned to Cambridge, maimed in some cases and badly wounded in other cases. The ambulance train arrived at Cambridge about 5 p.m., and contained 130 wounded men from infantry, cavalry and artillery regiments. In 30 cases the soldiers were unable to walk, and were carried from the train on stretchers by the local members of the Voluntary Aid Detachments, and thence to Trinity College, the headquarters of the 1st Eastern General Hospital (T). Included in the wounded were men of the East and West Yorks. Regiments, Royal Fusiliers, R.H.A., Norfolks and Suffolks, and a large proportion of them were men of the Brigade which was encamped in Cambridge recently.

1914 09 25

More Wounded Arrive.—A Great Western Red Cross train arrived at Cambridge on Monday evening with a number of wounded soldiers from the front, including many men of the 6th Division, who were recently at Cambridge. There were 174 patients, including 33 cot cases, and 156 of the men were taken to the 1st Eastern General Hospital in Burrell's Walk, and the remainder to the Research Hospital, Hills Road.

1914 09 25

Nearly 200 wounded soldiers arrived at Cambridge in two specially-fitted ambulance trains. They had come straight off the hospital ship that had brought them from France; some had been travelling for four days. They lay on beds arranged in two tiers along the sides of long compartments and were carried on stretchers to the ambulance vans waiting outside the station. Quite a large crowd waiting patiently for several hours to see them arrive and give them a cheer as they were brought out.

1914 10 23

Railway Tragedy. — A fatality occurred on the Great Eastern Railway line at Cambridge on Saturday, when a platelayer named William James Thurlow was knocked down by a truck while engaged in oiling points near Mill Road Bridge. Thurlow was working with a man named Jack Andrews, who was also knocked down and injured. Thurlow died after admission to hospital, and at an inquest the jury returned a verdict of "accidental death."

1914 10 30

Soham Red Cross help wounded soldiers from trains, Cambridge

More wounded – two trains

1914 11 06

Chivers stop paying workers' train fares

1914 11 20

GER new railway – act to be sought; includes line crossing River Cam near Sawston, stopping up stream, Ely land

1914 12 11

Swavesey gale damages railway

1915 07 19

100th ambulance train arrives – 15 07 19a

1915 09 10

Alfred Hutcherson retires as District Goods Manager, railway

1915 11 17

Trumpington VTC on duty guarding railway bridge – photo -15 11 17b

1915 12 01

Red Cross – what the VADs are doing – collect wounded from railway station – 15 12 01h

1916 02 21

Wounded Arrive. Another heavy convoy of wounded arrived on Saturday night. The train, which steamed in about 8 o'clock, contained 107 cot cases and 93 sitting cases, 200 in all. The work was smartly carried out by Cambs. 13 V.A.D., assisted by members of Fulbourn detachment. The work was supervised by Commandant Percy Alger, and the train was unloaded in an hour and 20 minutes

1916 02 09

Accident. An accident occurred to Mr. Ashman (Shelford), a railwayman, who, with others, was doing repairs on the G.E.R. near Haverhill. He was crushed between the brake van and the wall. He was very much hurt and is now in Addenbrooke's Hospital, where he lies in a precarious condition. Fred Hiam has built a light railway on one of his farms to facilitate collection and loading of produce – photo – 16 02 09e

1916 02 16

A fortunate escape. The fortunate escape of the Norwich and London express on Monday afternoon (says the writer of Town and County topics) when the engine was derailed after charging a fallen signal-post which obstructed the line near Ely, recalled the more serious accident to a similar train many years ago, through a balance weight falling in front of it from off the engine of a down express train. Then some passengers were very seriously injured and the train rendered almost a total wreck. The heavier engine which was drawing Monday's train, and the prompt action of the engine-driver appear to have been the main causes of preventing a repetition of the distressing results of the earlier accident. Everybody may be congratulated that matters were not worse than they were.

1916 03 29

Knocked down by Express,—On Monday, a railway employee, Sidney Frederick Lofts, aged 19, of Thoday Street, Cambridge, was engaged in shunting operations on the G.E.R. at Barnwell Junction when he was knocked down by an up express. The down express train had just passed, and this Lofts had noticed approaching. In avoiding it, however, he did not notice the other train. A motor ambulance was telephoned for and obtained from the military hospital, the man being taken to

Addenbrooke's Hospital. Here it was found necessary to amputate both legs. We were informed at the hospital, last (Tuesday) night that Loft's was going on as well as could be expected.

1916 07 26

Stationmaster Honoured. — All Cambridge will join in extending heartiest congratulations to Mr. A. Peacocke, the new stationmaster at Cambridge, upon the honour conferred upon him by His Majesty the King, who has graciously awarded him the Royal Victorian Medal in recognition of long and faithful personal service rendered during the period he was travelling inspector in charge of the Royal train on the G.E.R.'s system. Although Mr. Peacocke only took over the duties of stationmaster at Cambridge at the beginning of the present month, he was well-known in the town, having, up to two years ago, resided in Mill Road for upwards of 15 years. The presentation was made at Buckingham Palace last Friday.

1916 10 11

Great Eastern Railway campaign for egg and poultry development; demonstration train with models of poultry houses, hatching and rearing. Other branches of agriculture might follow — 16 10 11e

1916 11 22

G.E.R. Egg Train.—In response to the invitation of the Great Eastern Railway Company, representatives of the Board of Trade, Board of Agriculture and members of various agricultural societies, War Agricultural Committees, educational authorities, Co-operative Egg Societies and other organisations in the Eastern Counties assembled at the Cambridge Room, Liverpool Street Station Hotel, on Monday, and met representatives of the company, together with the demonstrators and lecturers who accompanied the G.E.R. Egg and Poultry Demonstration Train during its tour of East Anglia. The train, which began on October 9 at Mildenhall, concluded on Saturday last at Bishops Stortford. A total of nearly 46,000 persons, of whom by far the great number were adults, visited the train during the tour

1916 12 06

Railway Tragedy, — An inquest was held at the White Lion, Sawston, last (Tuesday) evening touching the tragic death of Mr. James Ward, head of the firm of Messrs. J. Ward and Co. bakers, of Whittlesford. The body of the deceased gentleman was found at 12.20 p.m. on Monday on the side of the railway track near the Whittlesford footpath between Sawston and Whittlesford. It is surmised that the rail guard of a passing engine had struck the deceased's neck, in which there was a deep gash. The left arm was badly shattered. Death was apparently instantaneous. Mr. Ward was nearly 70 years of age.

1916 12 13

Photo: Cambridge Railway Rifle Club miniature range — 16 12 13d

1916 12 13

Temperance Worker—His many friends in Cambridge and district have learned with considerable regret of the pending departure of Mr. Horace Brown, the known temperance worker and advocate, a regret which is shared by Town, County and University residents who have, in business matters, been brought into contact with him. Mr. Horace Brown has been a member of the Cambs. Band of Hope Union Executive Committee, representing the Eastern Division for the past three years, whilst he took a leading part in the Band of Hope pageants which were presented at Cambridge with so much success, his role being respectively Oliver Cromwell and the Mayor in "Stourbridge Fair". He has been in the employ of the Midland and L. and N.W. Railways for 17 years and during the past ten years has been in charge of the joint inquiry office at Market Hill, Cambridge.

1916 12 27

Christmas Railway traffic. — Altogether this year the Christmas traffic on the G.E.R. has been slacker than usual at Cambridge. There was, in the early part of last week, a good deal of passenger traffic, particularly among munition workers and soldiers. The general public, evidently responding to the

appeal made to them, did not travel as in previous years. The extra trains on Sunday, however, were well filled. There were fewer passengers than usual, and the pressure on this department therefore was not so great as in previous years.

1917 03 07

The Mail Cart - On Wednesday evening last the mail cart, which has been running for about 20 years between Cambridge and Willingham, via Milton. Landbeach, Cottenham and Hampton, could be seen making its last journey. Arrangements have now been made for the Cottenham and Rampton mail in future to come from Cambridge to Oakington station by train. Mr. Albert Young, of Rampton, has been appointed to fetch the mail from Oakington in the morning and to carry it to Oakington in the evening. Owing to these alterations, the Cottenham letters will be delivered an hour later than usual. The mail in the evening will so out at 8.45 instead of 8 o'clock, necessitating the posting of letters an hour and a quarter earlier than usual. The mid-day delivery will remain as before. There will in future be no delivery or dispatch on Sundays

1918 04 24

A great flood.—The Cambridge district was visited last week by a flood which reached a higher level than has been recorded since the historical inundation which followed the great storm of August 3, 1879 (says the writer of Town and Country Topics). Miles of country were under water on Wednesday; roads and paths were rendered impassable to foot passengers, the ferries at Cambridge were stopped, low-lying houses and premises near the river were flooded and the water was up to the permanent way of the railway between Chesterton and Waterbeach. Fortunately the flood water was got away quickly downstream, but its rise showed what a considerable quantity of water must have fallen in the first three days of last week, and also how important it is that there should be no obstruction at Denver. The river has shown more frequent tendencies to flood of late years than, formerly - one cause is said to be the clearing-out of ditches and water courses by War Agricultural Committees

1918 08 21

Engine Causes Fire. — By the passing of one engine on the Great Eastern Railway at Manea, three fields of corn, one of which was in stook, were set on fire and destroyed.

1919 04 02

Barrington-Foxton light railway – public inquiry; detailed report – 19 04 02b

1909 06 04

Attempted escape from custody – Detective Marsh's struggle in a train – 19 06 04a, 19 07 23a, 19

1919 06 18

Memories of Albina Wherry, VAD nurse on station and aircraft precaution squads; describes scenes on Red Cross railway trains full of wounded soldiers – 19 06 18f

1919 07 23

Railwaymen commemorate staff who died – 19 07 16d, photos – 19 07 23l

1919 08 27

Norfolk oil shale fields – plans for commercial development at Setchey; plant to be erected at Stow Bridge with railway line to St German's junction. At West Winch numerous workmen's dwellings have been erected; test bore at Wormegay – 19 08 27a

1919 10 01

Rail Strike,—The action of the N.U.R. Executive in forcing on the country, without warning, a national railway strike, bound up as it is with so many evil consequences and endangering the

country's food supply, met with universal condemnation in Cambridge, as indeed it has throughout the British Isles. The situation is being met with calmness and fortitude. Cambridge railway station went to sleep on Friday night at the behest of the N.U.R. Goods traffic and perishable articles were held up, cattle suffered similarly and the mere man in the street was faced with the necessity of arranging his own transport if he wished to get home during the week-end. Four or five passenger trains were handled at Cambridge on Saturday. About 90 per cent of the men are out. A few trains have been run daily during the week. The Divisional Superintendent of Operations said a large number of Cambridge civilians had volunteered for service on the railway. The strike affected the gas supply and postal services and food rations were reduced to the following amounts: Meat 1s. 8d. worth per-week, bacon 6 ozs. sugar 8 ozs. butter 1 oz, margarine 4 ozs, lard 2 ozs. An old lady walked ten miles on Saturday to fetch margarine. Coal deliveries were restricted to deliveries of one cwt – 19 10 01b

1919 10 08

Strike scenes – Royal Engineers arrive in readiness; Milk dump at Cattle Market; Mass meeting of railwaymen – photos – 19 10 08c

Railway Strike Ends,—The railway strike terminated on Sunday after an existence of nine days. Speaking generally, Cambridge felt but little ill effect from the national railway stoppage. Volunteers and loyal employees carried on a skeleton passenger service and voluntary effort in connection with road transport proved an invaluable asset in the movement of food supplies for the community. Travellers were incommoded, the public generally showed annoyance and anxiety in turn, and the man in the street exercised a Briton's privilege of "grousing" and carrying on the best he could, Cambridge railway employees returned to work on Monday, and about 8 a.m. 500 of the strikers marched to the station to report for duty. Others arrived in the course of the day, but owing to some misunderstanding in connection with the re-instatement of certain labour, the goods operatives declined to resume work. A deputation waited upon the local railway authorities and subsequently returned to the strike headquarters in Devonshire Road. Here the goods men were told to report for work next morning, the difficulties having been overcome. The men received the instruction with general pleasure, and one enthusiast called for cheers for the "brothers" who had settled the matter. A member of deputation discountenanced any form of demonstration, and the men dispersed quietly.

1919 10 15

Coming up – influx of students – during past few days has shown all the pre-war activity; students whose study interrupted by war have resumed education; arrival undergraduates coincided with ending of rail strike; Prince Albert and Prince Henry motored from Buckingham Palace to 'Southacre', Latham Road – 19 10 15a photo Royals 19 10 15b

1919 10 15

Scenes during railway strike – lorries, traction engine, milk churn in motorcycle sidecar – photos – 19 10 15c

1919 10 22

Jumped from Moving Train.— William Joseph Kidman (36), smallholder at Cottenham, jumped from a moving train when being conveyed to Bedford after being found insane and unfit to plead at Cambs Assizes to the charge of murdering his wife and 12 days old child at Cottenham. He had a cut on the left side of the head, but was found to be quite conscious, and said he would go quietly. He walked from the spot where he had been found lying face downwards, and was assisted aboard and the interrupted journey was resumed.

1919 11 05

"Our Jimmy" at Cambridge. — The Rt Hon. J. H. (Jimmy) Thomas, P.C., M.P., visited Cambridge on Sunday and received a cordial welcome from railwaymen. He was met at the station by an enthusiastic crowd, who hauled his Carriage through the streets of the town, and in the afternoon the Guildhall was crowded when Mr. Thomas, introduced to the gathering as "Our Jimmy," gave an address. He referred to the future of the railwayman's union from the political and industrial

standpoints, and spoke of the strain which he underwent during the railway strike, coming as it did upon five years of war-time anxieties. – 19 11 05a photo – 19 11 05c

1920 01 14

Railway carriages as dwellings; urgent cases at Histon; family of 13 in two rooms – could put carriage in garden – 20 01 14; photo – 20 02 11b

1920 07 22

Train crashes into buffers at station and mounted platform, front came to stop short distance from station buildings; platform ploughed up for some yards

1920 07 28

Railway station accident – engine mounted the platform, no injuries – 20 07 28a

1920 08 25

Accident at Ely station, painter working in engine sheds killed by train – 20 08 25

1920 09 01

First post-war excursion train from Cambridge to Gt Yarmouth – photos – 20 09 01

1920 11 24

Railway station fatal accident – Melkjohn crushed between buffers – 20 11 24b
Great Eastern Railway campaign for egg and poultry development; demonstration train with models of poultry houses, hatching and rearing. Other branches of agriculture might follow – 16 10 11e

1920 02 07

Fens Light Railway inquiry; Shippea Hill and over Lt Ouse, Southery & Keeble's Railway – would be for fruit; would need separate siding Shippea Hill; commissioners say it unsafe to have railway traffic supported on river banks

1920 06 07

Railway accident at Queen Adelaide junction

1920 06 17

Railway accident station; wagon lifter crushed

1920 08 19

Ely railway fatality, Cambridge man killed

1920 09 02

Linton railway porter killed by truck

1920 11 04

Histon railway fatality inquest

Miners; strike crisis; railwaymen decide against strike, passenger trains cancelled; emergency declared, lighting restricted, coal stocks controlled – 21 04 06b

1921 04 06

Miners; strike crisis; railwaymen decide against strike, passenger trains cancelled; emergency declared, lighting restricted, coal stocks controlled – 21 04 06b

1921 05 04

Rumours that University end term early due to miners' strike discounted; residents supply coal to allow essential services; railwaymen's' guaranteed week suspended – 21 05 04b

1921 07 20

Railway accident, death employee at Fordham station – 21 07 20c

1921 10 19

Man killed on railway at Marriott's crossing near station; need of bridge for 1,000 allotment holders – 21 10 19h

1922 01 25

Great Eastern Railway Cambridge staff photo – 22 01 25a

1922 05 06

The local Labour and Co-operative Parties were well represented on Parker's Piece on Saturday when a May Day Demonstration was held. The proceedings commenced with a procession which marched in the following order: Railway Silver Band, officers of the party, banner of the A.S.L.E. and F., Co-operative banner and party, smaller unions and women's sections, Cherryhinton band, builders' banner and banner of the N.U.R.

1922 07 03

A glance at the huge entries in all sections of the Royal Show will give one some idea of the heavy burden imposed on the Railway Company, and the colossal task of arranging for the distribution of traffic. The G.E.R. has built unloading docks situated at the Trumpington signal-box on the Long-road, Cambridge, where there is also another entrance to the Show ground. The work of unloading machinery and materials has been in progress since May 25th and considerably more than 2,000 tons will have been handled before the closing date for delivery. The intensive period will be when the livestock are received. About sixty special trains have been booked to arrive commencing at 3.40am on Saturday morning.

1922 07 25

The principal new roads proposed as part of the Cambridge town planning scheme include a main road starting from Red Cross, on Hills Road, going approximately north to Newmarket Road at the corner of Fen Ditton-lane, divided into sections. Number 3 runs in a straight line as far as the old Newmarket railway line and then slightly curves into Mill-Road. There are two branches which both lead towards the station. It will be necessary to form a subway under the railway or bridge the line, unless this line, which at present is only used for storage of railway carriages, is done away with altogether

1923 04 09

For the purpose of putting before the public the point of view of the strikers in the building trade, a meeting was held on Parker's Piece where there was a very large attendance. Mr Haynes said that 44 hours a week were enough for any of them to work. They had to remember that every man who was not with them was against them. In the event of the building operatives going down in the struggle, the railway men and workers in every other industry would have to look out, for the employers everywhere were out to reduce wages to a lower level than they were before the war. Urging the need of the workers standing together, Mr Overton said they were either partners in each other's poverty, or partners in each other's prosperity. The Trades Council were asking the other trade unions to come to the support of the building trade workers.

1923 07 28

The offer of the London and North Eastern Railway Company in connection with the acquisition of the site of the old Newmarket railway line for the purpose of linking up Cherry Hinton road with Mill road, Cambridge, led to a good deal of discussion at the town council. For many years they had tried to get the company to come to terms, so that they could join the Rock Estate with Romsey town. The line was the key of the situation, and there were great possibilities of development on that side of the town. Mill Road too was strangled at present. Councillor Ambrose hoped the negotiations would be

conditional on some promise of a bridge or railway for the people to get to the station from the Rock estate

1923 08 24

The staff of the Cambridge division of the L. & N.E. railway gathered to show their appreciation on the retirement of Mr Frederick Harradine after nearly half a century. He entered the service in 1875 as a porter at Cambridge station and two years later became a single line pilot on the old Newmarket line. In 1880 he went to Shelford as a signaller and later transferred to Ely. Returning to Cambridge he was made a divisional inspector. One of his duties was to be in attendance after any serious mishap. He was the best known railwaymen in the division, if not on the railway.

1924 01 21

The railway strike has now begun, and reduced services are everywhere being run. No Cambridge locomotive man has taken an engine out of the sheds this morning, said W Few, secretary of the local branch of ASLEF at their headquarters, the Kingston cafe, Mill road. "The whole of our members, with the exception of 2, have ceased to work and if any driver in the NUR of whom there are 20 at Cambridge, signs on duty, there is no firemen to work with him". Tomorrow a large covered-in motor charabanc will leave the Ortona depot for London King's Cross at 8.30. The return fare is 12s.6d.

1924 01 24

The railway strike proceeds at Newmarket with much less inconvenience to the public than once anticipated. There are few hurdle racehorses here and these can be provided for by road motor horse boxes. There are four passenger trains running to Newmarket and on Wednesday one luggage train ran from Ipswich with seven wagons containing flour and heavy goods. Lighter goods are arriving by passenger train. Opinion here is hopeful the drivers will accept the offer to close the strike

1924 02 10c

As a motor lorry, owned by Mr Parnell of Stretham and laden with 500 cans of petrol was approaching the Milton railway level crossing at a very slow speed the driver found the gates were closed to allow trains to pass. He applied his brakes, but they would not act and the lorry, which carried a very heavy load, smashed through the nearest gate, and stopped with the back part blocking the line. A coal train was approaching from Histon and a light engine from Chesterton Junction and quick action was necessary to avoid a serious accident. Gatekeeper Ernest Carter seized some fog signals and was able to stop the coal train and similar action taken by Patrol-Leader F.B. Pearson. The line was blocked for over an hour by which time the lorry was, after a small repair, able to proceed on the journey.

1924 02 19c

The inhabitants of St Ives were horror-struck upon hearing the rumour that the Vicar of Hemingford Grey had been cut to pieces on the railway bridge at Hemingford Abbots. Shortly afterwards the story was proved beyond doubt, the remains of the reverend gentleman being conveyed to the vicarage. It is supposed he was making a visit to Houghton to arrange for some special Lenten services and when on the bridge was knocked down by a pilot engine

1924 07 06c

Ely magistrates were occupied for some considerable time when an assault alleged to have taken place on a train came before them. The complainant, a poultry dealer, said he entered the restaurant car and asked for salmon. The attendant came back and said "The chef says you cannot have the salmon, as we may eat it for dinner". He was offered Welsh rarebit but did not know what that meant. This seemed to annoy the steward who struck him under the chin. Another poultry dealer said that some of the waiters were saucy sometimes, but she always put them in their place.

1924 07 12c

Within the space of a quarter of an hour three casualties were admitted to Addenbrooke's Hospital last night. The first was Mr Sidney Fuller of the Toll House, Beck Row. He was loading a truck on a light railway when it tipped and fell on him. While at the Conservative fete at Madingley Mrs Eliza Armitage slipped and broke her right leg and Jack Everitt of Cheveley Hall (3) was conveyed for treatment of a broken leg sustained by falling on a heap of stones

1924 07 19c

Albert Sory told Saffron Walden magistrates that he lived in a railway carriage bungalow with his invalid mother at Arkesden. He was awoken by a noise outside and saw defendant tear down the fence and throw the gate at the bungalow and then he came along with a stick and smashed eight panes of glass. P.C. Butcher said defendant told him he did it because the bricks on which the bungalow had been built belonged to him, and he would have them. He "would either burn the place down or pull it over"

1924 12 14c

Mr C. Phillips was born in Victoria Street Ely and started to work on the railway as an engine cleaner at Peterborough in 1876. Last year when rounding a bend near Ely, he saw one of the crossing gates left shut across the line. Unable to arrest the progress of his locomotive he crashed through the gate, part of which hung on the buffer, the other part being flung through the gateman's front window. A piece broke the Westinghouse brake pipe on the engine and caused the brakes to act. Nothing daunted Mr Phillips set to work to repair the damage, placing a penny in to stop the leakage and in five minutes the train was under way again

1925 01 21

Certain alterations are to be made in the railway station at Cambridge. The L.N.E.R. propose to extend the main line platforms at each end so that the whole of long trains may be accommodated. The goods yards on the Cherry Hinton side are to be re-arranged and extended for the storage of carriages. Up to the present the old Newmarket line had been used but this is being handed over to Jesus College and the Corporation in connection with the building of the new arterial road from Cherry Hinton to Romsey Town

1925 02 13

The Bill to electrify Cambs., Beds & Hunts comes before Parliament this session. A great generating station will be erected at Lt Barford. At first they propose to develop the central area including St Neots, St Ives and Ely & to give a supply in bulk to Cambridge and Newmarket. To help the electrical development of the railways it is proposed to link up with the transmission lines of the North Metropolitan Electric Power Supply Company and to afford a supply to the main railway lines within the area

1925 07 17

The acquisition by Jesus College of the old Newmarket Railway has enabled them to develop the Station building estate by the construction of Coleridge Road, and they are offering freehold land in suitable plots for the erection of private dwelling houses in open and healthy surroundings, with ample garden ground. Coleridge Road has been constructed by the college at great expense & is the first in Cambridge constructed of reinforced concrete. Lots are offered at prices from £225 to £250.

1925 07 21

An accident of a very serious nature occurred at Ely Sugar Beet Factory. A man named White was near the railway line when the dinner bell rang. A general rush is made by the workers for their various meal places and it is thought the man had left some of his tools on the permanent way. Shunting was taking place but he thought he could get his tools in time. However he fell with the result that one of the engine wheels passed over his leg.

1925 08 27

Such good progress has been made since activities first commenced in October last that it is expected that the Ely Beet Sugar Factory will be fully erected and equipped within the next four weeks or so. The whole frontage of the river has been concreted and unloading berths provided for 30 barges. There are farmers situated several miles from a railway station but near the river and the Factory Company are having their own fleet of steel barges which will be towed by tugs propelled by oil engines. Two overhead cranes, worked by electrical power, can be run along the quayside and used to empty the barges.

1925 09 07

Enthusiastic scenes marked the close of the Brass Band Contest in Cambridge Guildhall, which was won by the Cambridge Railway Silver Prize Band, the only local competitors. When the result was announced there was a furore of applause from the large audience present, and the bandsmen themselves momentarily lost their heads in their enthusiasm. The dignity of the large hall, which had rung for well-nigh two hours with the blare of brass instruments was quite forgotten. Hats were thrown high into the air and trombones and cornets waved to delighted friends among the audience.

1925 09 23

Two memorials of former members of the congregation were unveiled at St Barnabas church. The first was a tablet in memory of Mr William Saint. There were several sacred buildings in Cambridge which spoke of his skill and work. A stained glass window was dedicated to James Ringe who rose to the rank of express engine driver on the passenger train from Cambridge to York. It was the work of Messrs McLean-Leach & son.

1925 11 12

During the Newmarket race meeting season gangs of card twisters took out railway tickets to cover the period and 'worked' the trains between Newmarket and London. People were enticed to play, or if they refused, they were in serious danger of being assaulted. A Cambridge undergraduate was deprived of two banker's cheques, valued at £10, by the three card trick whilst playing in the train. As a result two men were sentenced to four month's imprisonment

1925 12 07

The advent of Father Christmas in Cambridge marked the approach of the festive season. He entered the town by means of the railway line. Crowds of young and old alike assembled outside the station and as the train steamed in a vision of scarlet and white, with a long white flowing beard, was seen at the window. The coach that awaited his arrival might have featured in the pages of some Hans Andersen's story with his coachman resplendent in his green and gold livery, a footman in blue, & two trumpeters attired in old gold facings and velvet breeches. To the sound of a fanfare of trumpets and the strains of the band he started on a triumphal tour of the town. On his approach to his temporary home at Heyworth's stores in Burleigh Street he was officially welcomed to 'Treasure Island'

1926 01 11

Cambridge Railway Clerks' Association annual dinner heard of the serious commercial encroachment which road transport is making upon the railways. It was entirely unfair that railway companies should have their business taken away from them by this new form of transport. The country would have to make up its mind whether it was going to have an efficient railway service or an inefficient, anaemic railway system hampered by this new form of competition with which it was unable to compete. Railwaymen were getting very restless about this question

1926 01 27

The adventures of a lady's new coat, ordered through the post were traced at Linton police court. From Worcester the coat journeyed on its appointed way until reaching Whittlesford station. Charles Walker, a parcels porter, said he conveyed the parcel from the train to the parcel office. It was later placed in the booking hall to await delivery. When the carman came for the parcels this one was missing. It was later found at the 48 mileage on the Duxford siding.

1926 01 30

The County Council is to make representation to the LNER about the difficulties occasioned by the gates at level crossings being unreasonably kept closed across the road. There were places where the gates were closed for a few minutes and at other where they were shut for something like 20 minutes before the passage of a train. Councillor Pearson said it was not the fault of the gateman. He knew of a gate-opener who was 'on' for 24-hours a day and the barber had to call to cut his hair. It was not fair to ask a man to be on duty so long having regard to all the traffic on the roads at the present day

1926 02 10

A railway accident occurred near Ely station. The 9.41 pm slow passenger train for Cambridge was proceeding to what is known as the branch up-road platform of the station, to get on to the main line. At the Dock junction the engine collided with the side of another engine which was drawing a goods train at a slow pace, bound for London. Both engines were of the large type and the impact resulted in the engines and a number of trucks and carriages being derailed. Fortunately there were only a few people in the passenger train – only five or six and no one received anything worse than a shaking.

1926 02 26

Sir – as a business man obliged to use the railways I wish to draw attention to the lack of punctuality of trains from the St Ives branch at Cambridge station. The 8.25 pm is invariably anything from a quarter to half-an-hour late, generally waiting ten minutes at Mill Road bridge whilst room is being found to run up to the platform. There is a rumour that the Ortona Motor Bus Company is shortly linking up with the National Bus Company at St Ives. The railway companies grumble about road transport competition, but it is their own fault and they have a remedy by being more punctual with the passenger service – H.G. Parker

1926 03 11

Prof B.M. Jones told a meeting: "I look forward to seeing in my lifetime a state in which flying is as safe, and has the same order of expense as railway travel, carried out at an average speed of 200 miles per hour, night and day". Up to the present the amount of flying done was not sufficient to affect the ordinary man in the street & the flying industries were small but aeroplanes were reaching the stage when they could take part as a real world force. He feared there was a big future for aeronautics if there was another war

1926 03 17

At Newmarket council Mr Dring called attention to the case of small-pox at Cambridge and asked what measures of protection there were against the disease being imported into Newmarket. Small-pox might be brought in railway carriages. Could these carriages be disinfected. The Medical Officer said it had not been overlooked.

1926 03 25

Damage to the amount of about £3,000 was done by a fire at a large granary in the station yard at Royston. It was very difficult to get a sufficient pressure of water and the whole of the vast storehouse was soon in flames. A railway elevated siding became involved, the metal rails twisted into grotesque shapes by the great heat. Nearby were some petrol tanks belonging to the Anglo American Oil Company; a band of volunteers secured the cans of petrol and deposited them in some gardens at a safe distance from the fire

1926 05 13

The situation was quiet at Romsey Town this morning, the railwaymen concerned in the new crisis patiently waiting developments which are taking place between the railway companies and the various unions in London. At the Co-operative Hall a telegram was read instructing the Cambridge men to remain out on strike until the unions got satisfactory assurance with regard to the men's reinstatement

1926 05 08

Cambridge station looked exceptionally bright this morning. Undergraduates in gaily coloured blazers added colour to the scene. The train services are gradually improving and great keenness had been shown on the part of undergraduates in bringing down supplies from London for the Station refreshment room. Tilly, the popular little tea shop girl, remarked while serving hot coffee and doughnuts to hungry undergraduates that she had never seen such cheerful and plucky workers as the volunteers who visited her counter during the General Strike.

1926 06 30

An inquest was held on the body of a man killed by a tube train at the Bank Station on Saturday morning. He was to have been married at St Barnabas church, Cambridge, on Sunday morning. The bride and her friends arrived at the church but found no bridegroom awaiting them, and after lingering some time had to return home. It was some time later they learned through a paragraph in a Sunday newspaper that he had been killed on the underground

1926 07 30

James Diver told an inquest that they were cycling home together from Chivers' factory. Two trains were about to pass the Impington level crossing; he waited by a lamp post and the deceased went to the gates and stood there. Owing to the noise of the trains neither heard the approach of a bolting horse; its knees hit deceased's bicycle and knocked him into the gate, which was broken in half.

1926 08 16

Earthquake shocks of unusual severity were felt on Sunday morning. In Cambridge occupants were awakened by the rattle of windows, crockery and furniture. Two residents in West Road were aroused from sleep by the oscillation of their beds; a lofty wardrobe continued to shake and its contents to rattle for some time. Railwaymen on night duty said the telegraph poles rattled and the windows of signal cabins shook. Several residents of Huntingdon felt three tremors

1926 08 30

The report on the Bishop Stortford railway accident during the General Strike says that the country was on the whole admirably served by the volunteers who undertook responsibilities of various kinds. In this case the district locomotive superintendent at Cambridge was left with one driver and a clerk, out of a staff of 600 men. By degrees a little band of volunteers was got together, all of whom were necessarily unfamiliar with much that they would encounter. The driver involved in the accident was under test to be qualified and had worked trains satisfactorily for some days. The actual circumstances which developed were of a type which would not be expected, though the results were very regrettable.

1926 10 30

Cambridge Borough Surveyor submitted four schemes for the lay-out of land at the Cattle Market. The site comprised 11½ acres and was purchased about 1884 from Jesus College. The west side was used for vehicles of those attending the market, the east side was partly used for allotments and the question had arisen of developing part for conveniences, a free library and an abattoir, which was most important. The Railway Company wanted to provide up and down platforms at the station. It was unlikely the bridge would be widened for railway traffic was decreasing.

1927 03 14

Pungent remarks were made at Saffron Walden council on the unsatisfactory rail services on the L.N.E.R. There were widespread complaints about unpunctuality and persons had threatened to leave the district in consequence. The time taken by the railways to deliver coal was scandalous and in many cases men had been stood of because it was impossible to get delivery of goods. The railway companies were given a charter by the Government and if they were unable to provide a better service they should be compelled to hand over control to someone else.

1927 05 04

Businessmen in Cambridge are brought into closer touch with Paris by the acceleration of the Southern Railway's night service, Southampton and Havre. As the result of close co-operation with the State railway of France and the mutual alterations of timetables, the double journey to Paris can now be made with only one-day's absence from England and the traveller is allowed about nine hours in the French capital. The acceleration results in a saving of 84 minutes on each journey.

1927 05 20

Prompt action by a young Ely man averted what might have proved serious damage at an Ely railway bridge. The fire occurred at the Cresswells Bridge over the River Ouse. The bridge, which is an iron structure, has a large amount of wooden sleepers, well pickled, and it was here the fire originated with flames rising seven feet into the air. Realising that a train was due to pass over he attacked it with pails of water from a tank close by. His first idea was that it was caused by a passing steamer or barge on the river but it is now thought it was started by a spark or hot cinders falling from a passing engine.

1927 06 25

Cambridge station had a very busy weekend. Over 4,000 travelled on Saturday to visit the Midsummer Fair. Extra carriages were attached to all incoming and outgoing trains and late special trains were run to Haverhill, Newmarket, St Ives and Great Chesterford. 1927 06 25

1927 07 19

Swavesey railway station was the scene of an accident. A horse and empty cart belonging to Mr Jabez Day, farmer and fruitgrower, was standing near the up-platform when the horse backed the cart into a large pile of baskets of fruit, upsetting the contents, and then fell on the line, dragging the cart with it. A train was rapidly approaching the station & the leading coach struck the horse and cart. The coach was derailed, the cart reduced to fragments of splintered wood and the horse so badly injured that it died in a short time. A breakdown gang from Cambridge soon cleared the down line on which both up and down trains had to travel, piloted by Mr H. Whitehead, the Swavesey stationmaster.

1927 08 31

Mr John Goddard has been railway stationmaster at Fordham for 18 years and taken an active part in village affairs. He is now retiring and the sum of £44 was raised by his fellow villagers, some of whom were blessed with an abundance of this world's goods and some who had no such encumbrances. As stationmaster he had been the friend of all, helping to forward everybody's traffic with the greatest despatch and the least amount of friction.

1927 10 11

The Prime Minister is expected to visit Barrington to open the new cement works. A distinguished company of about 100 will journey from London by special saloon carriages and the light railway direct to the works. The new works are already turning out great quantities of cement and when the second kiln is complete will be one of the largest cement works north of the Thames. About 200 men will be employed there permanently and it is expected that from a country village Barrington soon will be transformed into something like a small industrial town

1928 01 10

Reports from the flooded areas in the Fens show that the water is gradually subsiding. The position at the break in the bank of the River Wissey at Hilgay was unchanged. Water was still pouring through the gap and no attempt could be made at present to stop it. The arrival by rail of 10,000 more sandbags is being awaited. Men are in readiness to begin work on filling the gap as soon as the water level admits. At present the rush of water is too great.

1928 02 22

A porter's sensation dash in front of an express train, travelling at nearly 60 mph, and a thrilling rescue, was witnessed by amazed onlookers at Waterbeach station. The express from Ely was thundering into the station when the signalman saw a man standing in the level crossing gateway. The

wicket gate can be locked by a lever in the signal box but he dared not lock it with the man standing where he was, as the result would be to crush him badly. The man, who was deaf and has poor sight, then began to make a crossing. The oncoming train was less than 20 paces off when Goods Porter Ernest Curtis rushed across the line and held him between the two sets of metals while the express dashed by. The situation was so serious that onlookers thought both men had been killed.

1928 06 07

A Newmarket man told how the coal strike of 1921 caused him to give up his greengrocery round and take to selling peat. He 'made a pound or two' while it lasted and afterwards bought a truck of coal and started as a coal dealer. He did pretty well until the railway strike but then his coal was hung up and he never earned a penny for a month. He had nothing to do except sell a little coke and wood which did not bring £1 a week. He had a Ford motor lorry on the hire purchase system which cost him £128, besides which he had to pay a man to drive it.

1928 08 17

A terrible accident, occurred at Shepreth when the 10 am express train from Cambridge ran into a motor lorry at a level crossing, all the coaches being wrecked. The train was derailed the fireman killed and the drivers of the train and lorry seriously injured. The lorry, which was loaded with cement, was crossing the East Anglian Cement Company's level crossing at the same moment as the express was approaching. There was a terrific impact. The cement on the lorry flew up in the air so that to men at work at the station it seemed like the smoke of an explosion. After the impact the petrol of the lorry was ignited and in a short time was a blazing mass. The train continued for more than 100 yards, ploughing up the track, the carriages toppling over into a neighbouring field.

1928 08 18

Mr A.J. Kerr of Downing College, Cambridge, a passenger on the train involved in the smash at Shepreth crossing said: "Next to our carriage was a horse box, which was completely smashed, only the wheels being left. At the time of the collision a horse was in the box. It was thrown to the other side of the line, where it lay for some little time with a considerable amount of wreckage on top of it. Then it scrambled up and bolted down the line"

1928 08 20

There is one thought uppermost in everyone's minds, and that is the level crossing collision at Shepreth and the almost miraculous escape of the passengers. The accident must surely be without precedent in the records of railway disasters in the comparatively small number of casualties compared with the damage to the express. It is almost incredible that with nearly 100 passengers aboard the train not one of them was killed, though the engine fireman and the lorry driver lost their lives. The disaster is bound to raise afresh the question of level crossings such as that at Shepreth which is an occupation crossing opened and closed by those who use it.

1928 08 21

The funerals of the two victims of the level-crossing disaster at Shepreth, the fireman of the engine and the driver of the motor lorry, took place at Cambridge. The passing of each cortege along Mill Road was watched by a number of silent sympathisers. Owing no doubt to the rain comparatively few people had assembled when the procession of the lorry driver passed from Romsey Terrace. Heads were bared and traffic stopped, an Ortona bus remaining stationary until the party had passed. A short while afterwards the cortege of the fireman turned out of Suez Road. It was headed by railwaymen, then came the bearers followed by a motor hearse, the top of which was covered with beautiful wreaths.

1928 08 24

After the Ministry of Transport Inquiry into the tragic rail smash at Shepreth it now remains for steps to be taken to prevent the recurrence of such an accident. It was no one's business to pilot vehicles or foot passengers over the level crossing but was left to drivers to use ordinary care. Among the women passengers was a lady travelling to Finsbury Park, and she had with her a basket of eggs. After the

smash, of course, she transferred with the other passengers to a relief train. When he arrived at her destination a railway official asked, out of curiosity, if he might look in her basket. Not one egg was broken!

1928 11 17

The great gale which swept the country blew down trees, damaged roofs and caused damage. The most serious loss is the removal of the roof of the grandstand on the Cambridge Town Football Club's ground. The cross at St Barnabas church was carried away but no person was injured in its fall. Hoardings on the LNER Railway's property near Cambridge station have been razed to the ground and the line was blocked by a signal that was blown down near Waterbeach. At Trinity College the famous 'Sedgwick Elm' in the Fellows' Garden was partly blown down. At Ely two large sheets of lead were lifted on the roof of the cathedral nave and a huge chicken shed in Lynn Road was completely demolished.

1928 12 05

A passenger train travelling from March to Cambridge at over 40 mph crashed through one of the level crossing gates at Milton during dense fog. A motor lorry was practically on the rails. The engine driver appears to have been ignorant of the accident until he stopped some distance from the gates to await a signal. He then sent the fireman back to see what had happened. The passengers were unaware of any mishap. The Milton gates seem to be ill-fated. Numerous similar accidents have occurred there.

1929 01 16

Sir – Cottenham and Histon parents who have children using the Ortona bus to and from school in Cambridge are perturbed at the condition in which the children arrive. They are compelled to travel on the top deck of the open-top bus when it is full at the bottom. This usually happens in wet weather. What prevents the bus company from sending a covered double-deck bus for their use? Children from Histon have an alternative to go by rail, which is considerably cheaper and are provided with a heated carriage and kept dry – A Parent

1929 01 30

Mr George Sharman, of March, the head of a well-known Isle of Ely family, was killed through falling in front of an express train at March railway station. He founded the 'Cambridgeshire Times' series of newspapers in 1872 and was actively concerned with the management for many years, two of his sons subsequently taking over the reins. Recently he took over an estate and land agent's business. Several years ago he had a seizure while waiting on the March station platform and fell on the line but was not seriously injured. A widow, five sons and a daughter are left to mourn their loss.

1929 03 07

Cambridge farmers heard that a telephone has now been installed at Bartlow railway station; they could not understand why they were not installed generally all over the country. Most farmers were on the telephone today and the railway company were losing a lot of business by not having telephones at all stations. Many farmers sent pigs to factories by road because they could not get in touch with the railway to order a truck

1929 07 25

Throwing stones at railway engine – banned from cinema CDN 25.7.1929

1929 08 16

Pymoor railway sidings tragedy – CDN 16.8.1929

1929 08 17

Big Cambridge fire – sheds and railway trucks destroyed at Hills Road – CDN 17.8.1929

1929 11 05

Barrington Light Railway Company was an independent company entirely disassociated from the cement works except in business transactions. The railway originally belonged to the Dreadnought Cement Works Company which went into liquidation. They bought the railway but the works were sold separately. It owned engines and trucks and worked in co-operation with the L. & N.E.R. The line was a mile and a quarter long with a full gauge track. Their terminus was the entrance to the works; the line continued into sidings, but was maintained by the Cement Company, a Rating appeal was told.

1929 12 18

England has lost its oldest Freemason and Saffron Walden its oldest inhabitant with the death of George Moss Taylor. He was born in May 1833 and became a member of the Walden Masonic lodge in 1876, acting as Tyler for more than 50 years. He saw the first train run on the main London to Cambridge line from a hill at Littlebury 83 years ago. Cambridge has also lost a popular figure in Mr Frederick Dale, head of the brewery that bears his name. He started it 25 years ago and it rapidly became one of the largest in the district. He took a keen interest in the affairs of many local clubs and many forms of sport enjoyed his patronage, but he shunned political life. One of his chief hobbies was the collection of antiques and he had an extraordinarily fine collection of old English silver

1930 02 18

A special train was chartered to bring Mrs Albert Maltby, who lives at the West River gatehouse, near Ely, into Cambridge. The wife of a railway employee he was engaged in feeding her chickens when she slipped on the icy ground, breaking her leg. The gatehouse is in a part of the fens almost inaccessible save by the railway so a special train consisting of engine and brake was sent out to take her to Cambridge station from where she was conveyed to Addenbrooke's Hospital in the Borough Police ambulance. 30 02 18

1930 04 28

Chesterton Railway Bridge: replacement - 30 04 28

1930 10 09

The King and Queen will experience a sense of regret at the retirement of Inspector John Harrison of St Philip's Road, Cambridge. He has been Royal inspector since 1916 and was on the Royal train which took their majesties to Sandringham at the weekend. He remembers one occasion when he saw assembled on Wolferton station two kings, five queens, two princes and two princesses. Inspector G. Goddard, also of Cambridge, will succeed him. 30 10 09 & b

1930 11 07

A reader has sent a picture of a locomotive engine built by Headley Bros of the Eagle Foundry, Cambridge in 1849. It was a small single-tank affair with two big driving wheels, painted bright green and named the 'Eagle'. At first there was no tender, only a small place for the driver, though later it was extended to carry a saloon. It was intended for the use of the Eastern Counties Railway's engineer but its career was marred when in 1850 it ran over and killed the district superintendent. 30 08 19a
Mrs Emma Gunton is celebrating her 100th birthday; she is the second Cambridge lady this week to reach this wonderful age. She is remarkable: she walks without assistance, has her own teeth and eats her meals regularly. She has never had an illness and only required the attention of a doctor on one occasion she met with an accident. Born at Bottisham she possesses a fine memory and can recall the coming of railway trains. 30 11 07

1930 11 14

Great anxiety is being felt by Cambridge's 2,000 railway employees over the Companies drastic proposals on rates of pay and conditions of service. The tobacco and other luxury trades were affected at the time they accepted a reduction in wages to ease the companies' financial difficulties temporarily but this would have a serious impact on the spending power of a large number of relatively high-salaried men. Coming at a time when trade enterprise in Cambridge is approaching its zenith and the

University is being appealed to for commercial support the prospects may be regarded with concern. 30 11 14

1930 11 22

Cambridge Co-operative Society opened a new bakery in Sleaford Street equipped with the most modern machinery. 500 sacks of flour a week arrive from their own private railway siding close by. They are lifted to the third floor and the flour passes through a series of automatic machines which mix and knead it into dough that is baked in steam-heated ovens. The confectionery department has a wonderful machine turning out a wide range of cake mixtures. 30 11 22a-c

1930 12 01

There was a presentation to E.R. Stone who has recently retired as yard master at the now famous Whitemoor Goods Marshalling Yard, March where the gravity shunting system was successfully inaugurated during his last two years of office. At first his first plans had been regarded as revolutionary and a white elephant. But it had become the outstanding feature of British rail freight working. He was a typical 'John Bull' but beneath that bluff exterior was a kind heart. 30 12 01b & c

1930 12 27

The booking hall at Cambridge railway station was the scene on Christmas Eve of one of the most extraordinary happenings ever witnessed. As a taxicab was being driven back to the station rank its driver suffered a seizure; the vehicle careered through the booking hall entrance and crashed into the collapsible iron gates near the ticket collector's box. If the barrier had been wide open it would have gone right on to the track, and a train was just due. 30 12 27

1930 12 27

George Cornwell, signalman of Furlong Drove was presented with a 'First Aid' award certificate. In October 1929 a fireman fell off his engine and was run over by a train travelling in the opposite direction. His right leg was severed and he had wounds to the buttocks and head. Mr Cornwell applied a tourniquet and bandages, used a door as a stretcher and took him to the signal box. A doctor said the first aid had saved life for eight hours whereas the patient would otherwise have died in a few minutes. 30 12 27d

1931 05 01

At Cambridge the railway companies have a financial interest and working agreement with the Ortona bus company. The time will come when co-ordination will be very close; already they have had two experiments when railway return tickets could be used on the buses and vice versa, the Ortona chairman told an inquiry. In both borough and county they worked routes which were good and bad and excursions and long-distance tours helped to pay for unremunerated town services. 31 05 01c

1931 06 05

Farmers forgot their troubles and flocked to the annual Agricultural Show at Manor Park, Chatteris. Special trains, buses and private cars brought over 6,000 visitors and over 500 cars were parked in an adjoining meadow. In spite of the motor tractor the horse is by no means a back number in farming work and there were 78 entries in the Shire horse classes though Percherons and Suffolks showed an unexpected falling off. 31 06 05j

1931 10 02

New type of railcar being tried on branch lines – pic – 31 10 02q

1931 11 06

The keenness of competition between omnibus operators in the March area was apparent when the Traffic Commissioners heard applications for bus licences. The March Motor Co. operated services to Chatteris carrying 1,826 passengers a week. But the Railway Company objected saying they were the only operator to keep to a timetable. Their Benwick service averaged 350 on the two days a week that it ran. It had begun in 1922, but lapsed for some years until resumed in October 1930. W. Spriggs of

Parson Drove had one of his buses stopped by police for being overcrowded and it had twice broken down. 31 11 06c

1932 01 18

Cambridge suffered the loss of a centenarian with the death of Mrs Sarah Ann Howes of Glisson Road. She was a charming old lady with many interesting reminiscences. She attended the dinner on Parker's Piece to celebrate the coronation of Queen Victoria and remembered the opening of the Cambridge railway station and her first journey to Ely by train. Things are very different today, she would say: the poor people are much better off than they were and people have more sympathy with each other. 32 01 18b

1932 03 09

James Osborne told Girton W.I. that the village stocks in front of the blacksmith's shop on Church Green had disappeared before his time, but his father used to relate how he was ordered by the constable to supply a straw cushion for the last unfortunate victim who had to spend a chilly December night imprisoned in them. At Wash Pit Road farmers washed sheep in the brook which was also a bathing place for boys. Duck End Green was where ducks were raised on a large scale by the Eusden family and droves of geese brought by rail from the goose fairs in Lincolnshire were collected so their wing and tail feathers might be plucked and sold to make quill pens. 32 03 09

1932 07 01

Sir – Histon has a railway crossing – but it is by no means a 'level' one. It needs a footbridge for pedestrians. Recently two villagers were waiting for one of the long goods trains to pass along the railway; "Is it a goods or a passenger" one asked. "Goods" was the resigned reply. "Then I'll just go home and have a shave while it goes by". 32 07 01b

1932 10 28

John Yeomans came to Cambridge at the age of 19 in 1857 and purchased the shop at the corner of Petty Cury and Sidney Street from Mr Lyons where he carried on business as a chemist for 40 years. He had a vivid recollection of events: he knew George Stephenson personally and was a passenger in the first railway engine to run in England. 32 10 28e

1932 12 23

Cambridge Railway Silver Prize Band opened their new hall at Fletcher's Terrace, Romsey Town. They started in 1919 and still had 10 foundation members of the band. They won the Grand Shield at the Crystal Palace in 1922 and in 1926 won the Junior Cup. It showed what an extremely progressive band they were. 32 12 23f

1933 01 21

An NSPCC inspector told the court that the family lived in an old railway van at Hardwick which was in a most objectionable state. The bedding was in such a filthy state that he had burned it. The children were fairly well nourished but the awful stench which came from them polluted the police station to which he removed them. The father was sentenced to six months' hard labour. 33 01 21b & c

1933 01 30

Railway v motor traffic – 33 01 30f & g

1933 03 30

Plantation Farm, Littleport, death on light railway, Shippea Hill – 33 03 30b

1933 04 01

Cambridge taxi drivers protested against the amount charged by the Railway Company for the use of the station ranks. Each owner is charged £6 a year, which they regard as excessive and want reduced to £2. But the LNER says it has already cut it from £9 and that drivers could pay eighteen pence

weekly. Although taxi earnings had fallen off in recent years most paid the rent without difficulty. They also had the use of a shelter provided by the Company. 33 04 01a photo: 33 04 03c

1933 05 08

A motorist had a narrow escape at the Milton Road railway crossing subway. A medical student was driving towards Cambridge when two boys ran out into the road. One was knocked down. The car continued on a short distance before crashing into the fence and being left with one wheel suspended over the ten-feet drop. 33 05 08b

1933 05 12

A Peterborough pilot had a fortunate escape from serious injury when the aeroplane in which he was flying solo crashed in Manor Farm, Swavesey. When passing over the village he lost his way and dropped down close by the station in an endeavour to find his position. In avoiding one belt of trees he collided with another and crashed almost on the railway line. Railwaymen rushed to his assistance and he was taken to Dr Hart in Mr W. Hind's milk van, which happened to be passing. 33 05 12

1933 06 23

Railways were subjected to ever-increasing competition from road transport, the Railway Students' Association was told. Over long distances lorries seemed most vulnerable and railways could eliminate them by fixing their rates to make them unremunerative to the road carriers. It was wrong that people could obtain a motor lorry on the hire purchase system for about £25. This had resulted in unbridled competition. Every day they saw cases of these poor men, after having struggled for a few years, going through the bankruptcy courts. 33 06 23

1933 07 20

Harold Archer died in the same house in which he had been born in Ely on 17th February 1845. That day residents first saw a locomotive engine that had been sent by road on a horse trolley by the contractor to the Eastern Counties Railway to work the ballast train and make the Railway Embankment across the Cresswells. He played a prominent part in the city's affairs and became an authority on the drainage of the fens. 33 07 20

1933 09 22

An inquiry into the new Ouse Catchment Board byelaws heard objections from Railway Companies. Their bridges might be damaged by storm or flood and signal wires blown down but they would be unable to repair them without permission: was their traffic to be held up while they got consent. Huntingdonshire County Council felt they would prejudice the growers of bat willows. 33 09 22

1933 10 04

Railways are a never-failing source of interest to young and old. Cambridge Rotarians were told that trains between Cambridge and London occasionally attain 72 mph and tunnels on the Newmarket line were constructed so that trains should not frighten racehorses in training. In the fens one could stand 100 feet away from the railway track and be shaken like a jelly when a train passed. The outer rail settled half-an-inch owing to the 'draw' when the dykes dried and telegraph poles and even buildings leaned outwards. But the permanent way was practically immune from flooding. 33 10 04

1933 11 10

Sir - The London and North-Eastern Railway are to withdraw wireless from their London-Leeds trains blaming the 'prohibitive' charges announced by the Performing Rights Society for the use of its copyright music. But the fee is only three shillings a week per train and when challenged they now say the service was uneconomic and had never covered its cost. The payment of a fee to the composer is as much a cost of production as the ten shilling licence to the BBC or the installation of earphones – C.F. James, Performing Rights Society. 33 11 10

1934 02 07

The London and North Eastern Railway announce a new facility for their passengers. Trained typists, fully equipped with an office, will be provided so that letters may be dictated, correspondence dealt with and documents typewritten en route. A special dictating compartment will be set aside in addition to the business office and reasonable charges for the services provided will be made on the basis of prevailing rates for stenographic work. The service will start on the 8.15 am King's Cross to Newcastle express which makes the journey in just over five hours. 34 02 07

1934 02 11

A disused signal box at the West Junction, Adelaide, Ely, was completely destroyed by fire. The wooden structure, was superseded some time ago by a more modern box and was not used for any purpose. All the staff available were called out to endeavour to extinguish the flames, which soon secured a firm hold, eventually burning the box out. As a result of the fire trains on the Peterborough line were delayed for two hours. 34 02 11

1934 07 28

The 'His Master's Voice' show train arrived at Cambridge station as part of a national. It is one of the greatest collections of radio and gramophone instruments ever assembled. Visitors can see everything from a Columbia self-contained battery receiver to a luxurious ten-valve automatic record-changing radiogram. Other exhibits include a radio receive with no visible loud-speaker, the music being heard from behind the dial of an electric clock. The train carries its own power station, café and sleeping accommodation. 34 07 28

1934 08 24

Some 750 young anglers assembled on Parker's Piece and were played to the station by the band of the Boys' Brigade to catch a special train to St Ives to take part in the Albion Angling Society's annual fishing match for youngsters. The miniature army of anglers disported themselves along the river bank at Hemingford meadows. It was not unusual to see gathered in one small space at least half a dozen children with lines and rods crossed and floats completely submerged. The winners of the President's cup for the best catch were F. Parr (boys) and Marjorie Benton (girls). 34 08 24

1934 11 27

Two local railwaymen died when the Cambridge to Liverpool Street passenger train struck a lorry on a level crossing near Broxbourne. The train consisted of a locomotive, tender and six coaches, two of which completely overturned. The engine fell upside down but its fire was still burning three hours later. Other coaches came to rest lying at all angles and passengers had remarkable escapes. 34 11 27 & a

1934 12 20

Traffic Commissioners considered bus services between Ely and Littleport, Little Ouse and Shippea Hill. The LNER said that railway traffic to Littleport had showed a marked decrease with 4,000 passengers being lost to road competition in the last few years. But Mr Bert Washington said his bus services were practically identical with those he operated in 1930, though there were some unauthorised journeys not at the agreed times. 34 12 20b

1934 12 20

When a foreman railway porter reported a burglary at Warboys station little did he realise it would lead to the apprehension of his wife on a charge of stealing money from the office. Although the station was closed during the weekend it was the practice to leave money there. Police found a window had been broken but it was discovered the office could only have been entered by somebody with a key. The porter sat in the court at Ramsey while the woman tearfully confessed to taking two ten-shilling notes, two half-crowns and a penny. She was bound over to be of good behaviour. 34 12 20c

1935 01 18

The Ministry of Transport did not appreciate the heavy traffic passing through Ely carrying agricultural produce, Colonel Archer told councillors. Traffic lights should be installed at both the Lamb and Nutholt Lane corners. The County Council had recognised the need for a bridge at Chettisham railway crossing, the main artery from London to King's Lynn docks, but a "flying bridge" was also needed at Queen Adelaide where the fire brigade and medical men were often held up and heavy beet traffic was hindered and disorganised at the three pairs of crossing gates. 35 01 18b & c

1935 01 26

Sir – The Mill Road footbridge over the railway line was opened to the public on Monday August 3rd 1889. I was the last one to take the keys of the gates to the station – William Nelson. Sir - The iron footbridge over the railway on Mill Road had wooden steps and gave access to the open fields beyond it. In fact, so countrified was the area that when the Royal Standard was built it was known as 'Apthorpe's Folly' from William Apthorpe the brewer who built it. The bridge now stands on Coldham Common where it spans the Newmarket Line – H.D.C. 35 01 26

1935 02 20

The first passenger service to be run by a petrol rail motor will be operated as an experiment between Cambridge and Oxford. The vehicle is a 56-seater, painted red and silver with a glass-covered conning tower from which the driver obtains a clear view of the line. There are two sets of eight pneumatic-tyred wheels, the car being kept on the rails by the usual metal flange. It runs equally well backwards or forwards, cruising about 55 mph with none of the roar of an ordinary train. Inside it is a cross between an underground carriage and a single-decker motor bus. On a test run the rail motor was the object of great interest. Similar vehicles have been popular in France for some time. 35 02 20 & a

1935 03 21

Briscoe Snelson gave a lecture of exceptional interest on the Ouse and its tributaries, showing several beautiful slides of the scenery. This was a stretch near the Godmanchester-St Neots road where the river ran alongside the rail-road and every morning an enthusiast would wait to race the 'Flying Scotsman' with his motor boat. "Elsworth was a photographer's paradise. It has no traffic problems, is on the bus route and has no petrol pump. It is a typical Cambridgeshire village, and I hope it will not change", he said. 35 03 21a & b

1935 04 02

There are 4,000 road haulage contractors in the area today and 1,000 will be out of it in the next two or three years. They will lose their jobs, licences, vehicles and livelihoods. The Government was railway minded. Legislation never seemed to stop and it always seemed to favour the railways rather than the roads. But the whole transport world cannot be swept out at the pleasure of the railway companies. Somebody has got to carry on the road service of this country. Membership of the Cambridgeshire Road Haulage Association had jumped to 120. More would follow as even a haulage contractor had a flash of intelligence sometimes! Instead of being caned by successive government they should go to the Minister and speak with one voice, a meeting was told 35 04 02 & a

1935 05 08

Proposals to erect a bridge over the railway at Six-Mile-Bottom level crossing were opposed by the Parish Council because they thought it would spoil the beauty of the place. It would make the main road a racing track whereas if the traffic was held up, as at present, it gave country people a chance to get across. It would also affect the livelihood of shopkeepers and petrol-sellers. But this was a trunk road and the level crossing was very awkward. A subway would be very expensive and much more dangerous and the only way improve it was through a by-pass road. 35 05 08d

1935 08 27

Widening Long Road railway bridge – photo – 35 08 27a

1935 09 28

The Silver Jubilee streamlined express drawn by the new LNER locomotive, the Silver Link, broke the speed record for British trains by reaching 112 miles an hour between Hitchin and Huntingdon, missing the world record by 8mph – 35 09 28

1935 11 12

A six-year old boy who was riding on a horse drawing a wagon loaded with sugar beet was seriously injured when it was struck by a train. The collision occurred when the crossing at Black Horse Drove was shrouded in thick fog. The 7.7 am from Hunstanton caught the rear of the wagon and scattered the beet in all directions. The front of the engine, lamp brackets and vacuum brakes were damaged. The horses and their driver escaped injury 35 11 12

1935 12 11

Long Road railway bridge photo – 35 12 11d

1935 12 28

Mr William Macintosh, a member of the Cambridge firm of ironmongers, died following an accident at Graham's crossing. The express train stopped in Shelford station for five minutes after the accident. In another incident a passenger train from Peterborough to Cambridge was delayed when it ran through the gates at Dimmock's Crossing near Stretham and smashed them. Fortunately no passenger or member of the train crew was injured. The debris was cleared quickly enough not to affect the other trains on the line 35 12 28

1936 01 23

Long before the royal train carrying the dead King was due to leave Wolferton, thousands had assembled at vantage points along the railway route to London line to pay their final homage. Every few yards little knots of people stood in reverent silence. Hundred lined the platform as the funeral train steamed slowly into Cambridge station. 'Charlotte' the parrot, King George's inseparable companion, was on the train. It had been carried to the station in a covered cage, placed on the knees of a royal servant in a royal shooting brake. 36 01 23a & d

1936 02 05

The world premier presentation of the new GPO film unit production 'Night Mail' was given as the second gala performance in connection with the opening of Cambridge's delightful new Arts Theatre. It deals with the work of the Royal Mail night train from London to Scotland with plenty of novel-angle shots and some quick-fire doggerel which is made to synchronise with the train beats. Other features were a highly-diverting slapstick Mickey Mouse cartoon and the British Movietone News 36 02 05a

1936 03 03

Long Road new railway bridge – photo – 36 03 03

1936 07 09

March was likely to be a bull's eye for air attack as it was an important railway marshalling centre, residents were warned. Windows smeared with treacle and covered with paper would prevent glass from flying and one room should be made gas proof by blocking up the chimney and other cracks. No air raid would last as long as twelve hours and they would be able to get fresh air as soon as the 'All Clear' had sounded. Following an attack using mustard, tear and liquid gas decontamination would be carried out by the St John Ambulance Brigade. But people must wear a mask as some gases hang around for long periods. 36 07 09b

1936 08 01

The L.N.E.R. has made provision for a heat wave by giving orders that new trolleys which serve light refreshments to the passing travellers from station platforms should be equipped with refrigerating apparatus to ensure minerals and other soft drinks are kept cool. They also serve tea, coffee, cakes,

cigarettes and the dainty modern successor to the railway sandwich of grandfather's day. Two of the new barrows will be placed at Cambridge and Ely stations 36 08 01a

1936 08 18

A lorry driver and his passengers jumped for their lives in the nick of time at Main Drove level crossing near Black Bank station. The lorry, belonging to Mr E.A. Cole of The Two Pounds, Little Downham, was being used for carting hay and was on the rails when the driver noticed a train coming. He attempted to reverse, then jumped clear. The train struck the bonnet, smashing it. The radiator was torn off along with the off-side wheel and lamps. Such was the force of the impact that parts of the railway engine were broken off with one heavy metal plate found 60 yards away. 36 08 18

1936 08 29

Rail times for the journey from Cambridge to Oxford have increased since 1886 when the quickest journey took three hours. But although a noisy minority quick through journeys there were insufficient of them to make such a service pay. The railway company had experimented by running an express petrol rail car but it was a complete failure from a commercial point of view: the patronage was so small they had to give up within a few weeks. Additional stations had been opened on the line since the war, necessitating more stops. 36 08 29

1939 09 22

An RAF pilot had a remarkable escape when his Bulldog machine – a single engine fighter – landed on the railway line near Six Mile Bottom. He was engaged in taking weather observations in thick fog when he got into difficulties and descended in a field, crashing through a fence and on to the railway track. The force of the impact cocked the tail up into the air and it became entangled on the overhead wires running beside the railway line. This probably saved the pilot's life. An oncoming train was stopped and passengers wheeled the plane into a field. 39 06 22b pic 36 09 22

1936 10 05

Six people were injured following a collision near Milton Road level crossing. A passenger train struck a light engine which was stationary on the reception goods line and its driver and fireman had a fortunate escape from being buried under tons of coal from the tender. The crossing-keeper said the passenger train was on the wrong line. Its front was badly smashed and a coupling broke but it did not leave the track. The passengers received a severe jolting. 36 10 05

1936 10 10

March councillors debated bridges. A footbridge should be erected over the river at Marylebone Lane: it would help in getting more houses built in the vacant spaces within the town. But the majority of the inhabitants, many of whom were railway employees, preferred to live on the north side of the river. Coun Ogden thought a light bridge could be erected in Wigstones Road and advocated the building of a highway bridge to which a by-pass could be made. An alternative would be a bridge from Creek Road (through Lambs Yard) to Elwyn Road. 36 10 10b

1936 11 04

Work will start shortly on a big railway improvement scheme between Soham and Snailwell junction. Six miles of the L.N.E.R., which is at present single track, is to be doubled. A large amount of labour will be required to complete the work which is part of a general speeding-up scheme. The line forms part of the route used by Continental express trains between York and Liverpool and Harwich. It will mean a reduction in journey time of from two to four minutes 36 11 04a

1936 11 07

Cambridge Town Council will make history when it elects a Labour Mayor for the first time. Having retired from the railway service, Ald W.L. Briggs will be able to devote the whole of his time to the duties. But his fellow citizens will not expect him to entertain on the same lavish scale that some Mayors have been able to do. Some people think the mayoral grant is sufficient to meet all demands

made upon the holder, but this is not so and it is often necessary to dig pretty deeply into one's own pocket. Ald Briggs deserves further congratulations for he has just passed his motor driving test 36 11 7a cartoon 36 11 07b 36 11 09b

1936 12 09

Whitemoor railway marshalling yards near March is the most up-to-date in England and the first to be equipped with mechanical rail brakes. The 'up' yard was opened in March 1929 and dealt with traffic from the collieries. The main feature was the 'hump' where wagons were sorted. It was very much like the Long Road bridge, only much bigger. It had good floodlighting but it wasn't a very pleasant place at night. The working is very intensive. It attracted visitors from around the world, especially the Japanese who spent days there, Rotarians heard. 36 12 09a

1936 12 24

Chesterton Gravel Pits have been transformed into a flourishing business working from dawn to dusk. A Priestman dragline gets the gravel out of the ground, grabbing a third of a ton in its great steel jaws and depositing it in a truck which a patient horse drags to a narrow-gauge railway. It needs no driver but stands still while the load is emptied, then lumbers slowly back to fetch more. An ever-moving belt feeds a constant stream of raw gavel into the washing and grading machine from which it pours into appropriate heaps where a fleet of lorries cart it to its destination. 36 12 24a

1937 02 24

Motor vehicles are to be substituted for the horses engaged in railway cartage traffic in Cambridge. They will displace 18 horses after which the railway would have no horses in use 37 03 06a # c.26.2 Men worked in gas masks when two heavily-laden lorries came into collision at the junction of Chesterton Lane and Castle Street. The crash happened at 5.30 am when the traffic lights were not working. The vehicles were an Eastern Railways lorry laden with ten tons of fruit and a lorry carrying 4,000 bricks. The impact threw the Railways vehicle on to its side and it fell on to the street refuge, the lamp standard and two posts. A passer-by was overcome by gas so workmen donned masks to move the load so a cock could be fitted and the gas turned off. 37 02 24a

1937 05 24

An inquest into a worker at Shepreth Cement Works was told that trucks were let down into a tunnel under the lime clamps to be filled. Deceased had been clearing lime that was blocking the rail when he had been hit by a loaded truck that had run back after a rope broke. There was a clearance of six inches between the track and the wall with recesses in which a man could stand. A normal person would have heard the truck coming, but the man was more than slightly deaf. A verdict of 'Accidental Death' was recorded 37 05 24a

1937 06 14

George Hawkins, the Cambridge caterer, and his wife both sustained injuries in a motor accident. He was driving along Trumpington Street when one of the car wheels got into the run at the side of the road and the car collided with a lamp post. Another accident occurred at Pampisford Railway Station cross-roads when a van plunged down an eight-foot bank after a collision. The driver, Mr T.H. Marriott, a Duxford butcher, was trapped. When extricated it was found he had suffered a severe scalp wound and other injuries. 37 06 14a

1937 07 07

Newmarket Dip Swimming Baths were robbed of money, cigarettes, two bottle openers, some chocolates and a key to the ladies' cloakroom. Police found a painter asleep in the waiting room of Six Mile Bottom railway station. He was in possession of the missing items together with an invoice that had been in the till. The man said he had been working at a fair in London and bought the cigarettes for a stall. He had taken a train to Ely, then walked to Newmarket where he'd found a brown paper parcel containing the items. He's been deported from Canada and had numerous convictions for theft. He was sentenced to 18 months hard labour 37 07 07b

1937 07 27

Milton Road railway crossing bridge proposed – 37 07 27

1937 08 05

A.M. Morley member of Cambridge Railway Ambulance team – 37 08 05a

1937 08 11

Accident at March East railway crossing – 37 08 11a

1937 08 14

Travellers between London and Cambridge will soon have three additional fast trains performing the journey non-stop in 65 minutes. All will have buffet cars, bringing the total to 10 each way daily, in addition to the restaurant trains already running to Liverpool Street. The first service of five buffet cars was inaugurated between Cambridge and Kings Cross in 1932 when the trains each consisted of three coaches. So popular has the service become that at least double this accommodation has to be provided regularly 37 08 14b

1937 08 25

An attempt by an insurgent force to cut the railway at Bartlow Station saw rifle battalions attack on a wide front. A small British machine gun battalion took up a position on the west bank of the River Stour while soldiers demolished bridges to prevent the attackers occupying the high ground at Shudy Camps and Horseheath. Villagers had a fine time watching the ponderous tanks pass by and comparing them with the guns and beautiful horses of the 1912 manoeuvres. It was part of the military exercise simulating that in Egypt before the latest Anglo-Egyptian treaty. 37 08 25

1937 10 01

The Great Ouse Catchment Board considered anti-flood schemes costing over £300,000. Work was in progress on the Old West bank between Aldreth Causeway and Willingham flat bridge, and on Soham, Swaffham & Lakenheath Lodes where weaknesses were found during the spring floods. Draglines have been hired from several contractors as have several miles of railway track and over a hundred tipping wagons. At Manea they have opened up another clay pit and started re-facing the bank but have had to cross over several watercourses and make several substantial bridges. 37 10 01a & b

1937 11 04

Milton Road Railway Bridge over level crossing proposed – 37 11 04

1937 12 13

The Borough Council approved a scheme for a ring road from Coldham's Lane to Ditton Walk. This would be a dual carriageway with a grass strip 26 feet wide between them, a nine-foot wide cycle track and paved footpath. It would be reduced to 100 ft under and near the bridge which would carry the railway over the road near Coldham's Lane. This will be constructed by the railway company. The cost would be £77,550 (£4.3m today), to which must be added the construction of a soil sewer. 37 12 13b

1938 01 01

The L.N.E.R. have just issued a new lantern lecture on Cambridge that may be borrowed free of charge by societies through the country. The 70 slides, which depict the colleges and other places of interest, should be of real value, because they will awaken interest in our town and University and may be the means of bringing us many visitors in days to come. Suitable reading matter has been prepared by Mr P.C. Fitzgerald beginning at the Round Church and describing a walk around the centre. This is one of 276 sets of lantern slides available from the Railway Company at King's Cross Station. 38 01 01

1938 01 13

Councillor H.G. Martin proposed that a bridge should be erected over the level crossing at Chettisham station. Not long ago a six-wheel lorry was unable to stop when coming down the hill; it crashed into one of the gate posts before coming to rest on the line causing considerable disorganisation of rail traffic. This was the most dangerous crossing in the Isle and a bridge should be erected. But Coun Sole said it would be most convenient for Coun Martin because he would not then have to wait at the crossing. No action will be taken 38 01 13a

1938 01 14

Haddenham improvements at Duck Lane – Star Brewery give land; but Cherry Tree landlord does not; no bridge for Chettisham railway crossing – 38 01 14c

1938 01 15

The LNER is going to make a big effort to ensure that the interior of their trains is kept up to drawing room standard. A staff of travelling train attendants and cleaners is to be appointed who will accompany the train throughout the whole journey. They will ensure an adequate supply of clean towels and soap in the lavatories, remove litter from corridors, dust window ledges and empty ashtrays in compartments not occupied by passengers. When trains stop at stations they will polish up the outside door handles. Where conditions are suitable women will be appointed for this work as it is felt that the feminine touch will yield the most satisfactory results. 38 01 15a

1938 03 28

Railway Social Club gives up recreation ground – 38 03 28

1938 04 08

George Wybrew started his railway career in 1892 as a clerk at Sawbridgeworth from which he was transferred to Bishop's Stortford, Liverpool Street and finally to Haverhill. He was appointed stationmaster at Stretham in 1912, then went to Burwell and Mildenhall. In 1927 he was made stationmaster at Saffron Walden and since 1930 has also been in charge of Audley End station. He believes that in spite of the ever-increasing road transport the railways, which have reached a high degree of efficiency, are unrivalled for speed and safety 38 04 08a

1938 04 19

A Cambridge newsagent for over half a century, Mr Frederick Rossendale passed away after a stroke at the age of 81. A well-known figure locally, he was a member of the Borough Police Force before he opened his newsagent's business at 14 Fitzroy Street, trading under the name of Rossendale and Clamp. As a bank messenger he had the task of taking the bank money from Cambridge to London by train before the days of modern transport facilities. 38 04 19

1938 04 29

While the band played 'Auld Lang Syne', a special train drew out of Saffron Walden station carrying 19 officers, three warrant officers and 237 men of the 80th Squadron, RAF, which has been stationed at Debden for some time. They were bound direct to Southampton for embarkation, sailing on Saturday for Egypt, where they will be stationed at Ismailia. Friends and sightseers who saw the men off envied them on leaving bleak Britain for the sunny Suez 38 04 29

1938 05 06

New diesel train tried on Cambridge-Oxford service – 38 05 06

1938 05 07

Railway exhibition with rolling stock opens – 38 05 07c

1938 05 26

Cawdle Fen Drainage Commissioners were sued by a farmer whose land was flooded in 1936 and 1937 when water flowed across the railway line. The sluice gates in the lock had been worn out for

tears and water leaked back into the fen. The drains were grown up and had not been 'mudded out' for some time. The gauge on the pumping station was out of place because the fen had sunk. In Lt Thetford they had stopped the old paddle wheel and installed two efficient pumps and it was not possible to drain Cawdle Fen without pumping. But the Commissioners said the system could not be expected to cope with abnormally high flood conditions 38 05 26 & a

1938 07 09

The death of George Alfred Warren closes one of the remaining links with the past history of the London coal trade. Born in 1843 at Cambridge, he went to London when the Eastern Counties Railway was being extended to Bishopsgate and with his brother founded a coal company at Stratford and Spitalfields, later joining with Thomas Coote & Son of Huntingdonshire to form Coote and Warren Ltd 38 07 09

1938 07 14

The County Council intended building a road and bridge at Whittlesford Station, above the railway and river giving about 15 feet of overhead height. There would be a considerable amount of concrete used in the construction with a series of arches in the viaduct open at each end. These could be closed and made gas-proof at little extra cost, making them suitable for protection from an air raid. But there was only a very scattered population and it was a bad idea to construct shelters at a place where there was an important road and railway 38 07 14e

1937 09 13

An experimental stream-lined Diesel-driven light passenger unit, something new in rail transport, made its first trip on the Oxford and Cambridge route. The unit consists of three cars permanently coupled together with a driver's cab at each end of the train. Acceleration was much more rapid than a steam train and instead of the familiar 'chugging' there was a pleasant whirr. Soon it was travelling at 75 mph with unusual smoothness. It has loud-speaking communication between driver and guard and the seats are reversible, so passengers can face whichever way they please. 38 09 13a & b

1938 10 08

At long last a start is to be made on the construction of a railway bridge on Milton Road in place of the present level crossing. Ministry of Transport approve has finally come through and work is expected to take 18 months. The crossing is frequently closed to road traffic and the adjacent subway, which has not sufficient head-room for larger vehicles, is narrow with steep gradients. Now there will be a bridge 44ft wide with a 30 ft carriageway and two footpaths. In 1935 2,000 motor vehicles and 1,000 pedal cycles used the road each day 38 10 08

1939 01 30

Flood levels in the fens remain high. At Waterbeach the Town Crier made a call for volunteers and rallied forty men to work on the banks of the Bottisham Lode. At Littleport station sleepers are covered and only the tops of the lines are showing. Goods trucks are standing with water beneath them. In the Holmes inhabitants have left before their houses were surrounded. At Swavesey Mow Fen and Middle Fen railway gatehouses have had to be evacuated. 39 01 30a pic Holmes flooding – 39 01 31

1939 02 01

King and Queen with princesses join Royal train at Cambridge after visit Newmarket - 39 02 01a

1939 02 25

Mr H.R. Dimock flew over Ely in a Heyford bomber as official observer during the two-hour blackout to test the A.R.P precautions. The night was wet and rain on the windows made visibility difficult and light from the engine exhaust caused a slight haze preventing weak lights from being visible. So he used the revolving turret which was quite open. As they discussed where to drop imaginary bombs the number of lights diminished but there were always about 300 showing somewhere. The railway station was plainly visible and could have been bombed with great precision 39 02 25b

1939 03 23

A Hardwick family had been tenants of Pembroke College on lands at Hardwick for nearly 100 years. Now a widow claimed the tenancy belonged to her. She said the land had been granted to her grandfather by Lord Hardwicke and she'd lived for 15 years in a house consisting of two railway carriages. The deeds had been stored in a box that had been destroyed in a fire. But Pembroke produced documents showing they'd been granted the land under the Hardwick Inclosure Act. 39 03 23

1939 06 01

Three women were killed and a dozen injured when an express train from Hunstanton to London collided with a lorry on an occupational crossing near Hilgay station. The dead were all in the second carriage, which toppled over on to a stationary goods train. The driver, D. Barber and firemen R. Miller, both from Cambridge, were injured. The train was travelling at 40 mph when it struck the lorry, flinging it 30 feet into a ditch. The side of the cabin was torn off and the railwaymen scrambled out. 39 06 01 & a

1939 07 14

An exercise demonstrated war-time black-out conditions in Cambridge. Streets lamps were turned out, speed limit signs extinguished and red hurricane lamps were placed on traffic islands. The external lights on police boxes were also put out and the bulbs removed as an additional precaution. Most vehicles drove slowly with only side and rear lights and cars using head-lights were stopped. Lights at the railway station were left on but carriage blinds on the 11.55 from London were drawn at Bishop's Stortford 39 07 14

1939 07 15

Although a considerable number of Militiamen from Cambridge travelled to their depots the scene at Cambridge railway station was little different from a normal Saturday. I expected to see goodbye and good luck messages being given to the first of the young men who are to give the next six months to the service of their country. But there were no martial strains to cheer them on their way. The explanation is that the men were free to travel as they wished and by travelling in small parties they avoided any publicity – and any reporters 39 07 15a

1939 09 01

The first children who have been separated from their London families by the dark threat of war arrived at Cambridge station. The train contained 800 boys and girls, all had a label bearing their name and address, a few carried a football, several had oranges. They were handed bags containing their rations and helped on to the waiting buses 39 09 01a

1939 09 01

The first 600 of the 1,100 children allotted to Huntingdon arrived at the North Station. They were received on the platform by officials and after being given refreshments were taken by a fleet of buses to the districts allotted to them. Other train loads followed at short intervals and are being cared for by Huntingdon residents who are doing all they can to make their little visitors as comfortable as possible. 39 09 01b

1939 11 23

Hundreds of parents had not been able to visit their evacuated children at Saffron Walden because of the cost of the journey from Tottenham although by arrangement with the railway company they were allowed to travel at cheap rate on one Sunday in each month. . Lodging money made available for poor parents who wanted to stay the night when they made the trip and some children might be moved nearer London 39 11 23b

1939 11 28

Hilgay railway smash caused by accident – 39 11 28a

1939 12 28

A collision between an Army tank and a lorry occurred on the Station Road, Ely, underneath the railway bridge. The tank, which was driven by R.W. Baker, was travelling towards Newmarket when it hit the lorry which was travelling to the Ely Beet Sugar Factory with a load of beet. Very little damage was done to the vehicles and both drivers escaped injured. But traffic was held up for about half an hour 39 12 28

1940 04 12

Railway station fire destroys records – 40 04 12b

1940 05 13

Railway train collision near Long Road Bridge, goods wagon derailed and hit by passenger train – 40 05 13

1940 02 09

New Stationmaster.—Mr. F. Pick worth, stationmaster at Holme, has been appointed Stationmaster at Huntingdon in succession to Mr. W. G. Wenman, who resigned to take up an appointment as yard, master at Lincoln. Mr. Pickworth; has seen service on the railway for nearly 43 years, commencing as a clerk on the old Great Northern Railway at Mablethorpe Lincs., in 1897.

1940 05 17

Driver Saves Train.—The driver of the 5.31 p.m. passenger train from Cambridge to King's Cross averted a serious accident near the Long Road Bridge on Saturday, when some goods wagons became derailed across the passenger train's path. Rapidly applying his brakes, he brought the train to a standstill just as it touched one of the wagons. Its four leading wheels were derailed, but neither passengers nor train crew were hurt. The only injuries were those sustained by Driver Johnson and Fireman Layton, of the goods engine, which also became derailed. Johnson sustained a bruised shoulder and Layton burned his hands. The goods train, which was on a loop line adjacent to the main line and was travelling in the same direction as the passenger train, was derailed by a pair of safety points designed to prevent any train from the loop line entering the main line when the line has been signalled as clear and some dozen trucks came off the rails blocking both the up and down main lines. The front of the passenger train ploughed ten or 12ft. into one of the waggons before coming to rest. The goods engine fell on its side, and the driver and fireman scrambled clear

1940 09 13

Killed by Drifting Balloon.—A man was killed and considerable damage done when a barrage balloon drifted over Cambridge yesterday afternoon. The dead man was Daniel Dunston, a platelayer, of 146 Mill Road, Cambridge. Aged over 60, he was near the railway between Mill Road and Coldham's Lane Bridge when he was caught by a steel cable trailing from the balloon. He was carried for a distance of over 30 yards and then dropped, sustaining fatal injuries. Before the accident the balloon had passed over the town at a considerable height. In the Mill Road area it came lower, and the cable threw a wireless pole through the roof of a house in Mill Road. The interior of the house was not damaged and no-body was injured in this incident. The balloon then gained height and drifted in the direction of Teversham. At Teversham Hall an old chimney stack on a scullery was struck by the cable. A piece of the cable was snapped off and the balloon at once shot up into the air and continued in an easterly direction. Telephone wires were damaged and the electricity supply for a village was affected for a time

1941 01 09

Cambridge railway control centre in bomb-proof shelter – feature – 41 01 09a

1941 07 14

Miracle of reclaimed fenland – potatoes grow on land that was derelict a few months ago At Feltwell Fen; new branch of the light railway known as 'Bread and Butter Express' and owned by Ministry of Agriculture – 41 07 14

1941 02 14

Train derailment,—Due to faulty points, a goods engine and about 25 trucks were derailed on the north side of Soham station about 7 a.m. on Saturday, causing the suspension of services on the Newmarket-Ely line for 12 hours. Driver Cross and the fireman managed to jump clear from the engine. By nightfall one line was working again, and the speed and efficiency with which the breakdown gang did their work was praised by the L.N.E.R. District Superintendent (Mr. Sutcliffe).

1941 08 15

Marvellous Escape. — As Mr. L. Curtis, a porter on the L.N.E.R. North station at Huntingdon, was shutting a carriage door of the 12-28 train to London on Saturday, he was caught by the door and dragged under the moving train. The latter was immediately signalled to stop, and it was found that Curtis had escaped with minor injuries and shock. He was removed to the County Hospital, where he regained consciousness, and on Monday he was able to return to his home.

1941 08 29

Railwayman's lifetime spent: Retirement, — A lifetime spend in the service of the railway company is the proud record of Mr. Christopher Cornell, Needingworth Road, St. Ives, who reached the retiring age of 65 years yesterday (Thursday). He started his railway life with the old Great Eastern Company when he was 17 years old, and of 48 years' service, he has spent 44 of them at St. Ives, and has been a signalman for 42 of them. During that time he has served under six stationmasters.

1942 10 10

Shunter dies after falling from railway engine in shunting yard – 42 10 10a

1942 05 29

Prisoners at Singapore, — An interesting reference to the treatment of prisoners in Singapore is contained in a letter which Mrs. E. J. Harper, of 28 Abbey Walk, Cambridge, has received from Mrs. Pringle, mother of Lieut. Alastair Pringle, of the Royal Engineers, who was taken prisoner at the same time as Major Harper. After expressing pleasure that her son has the company of Major Harper, Mrs Pringle goes on: "Now I have good news to give you. I had a letter from Ted Furse's mother this week, and she has had word from the father of a man who escaped twelve days after the fall of Singapore that the prisoners were being well treated up to the day he left and that all were at work repairing the damage that had been done. It is a blessing that they have got something to pass the time. How they will each react to this captivity I do not know, and we must just hope for the best. It is very comforting in the meantime to have this news." X"

1943 04 24

Stationmaster, — Railway passengers and others in the Royston area (says Watchman) will learn with interest of a staff change involving a popular railway official. He is Mr. George Green, who has been well-known in the town as Chief Clerk at the local station, and who has now been appointed Stationmaster at Meldreth and Melbourn. In the last war he lost a leg at Builecourt; but this handicap did not damp his enthusiasm upon the formation of the Home Guard in the town, and he became one of the original local members. And he is now Company Sergeant Major- testimony not only to his keenness, but to the recognition in higher quarters of his useful military experience.

Norfolk blacksmith collided railway crossing gates at Chettisham – 43 04 24

1943 04 21

John Arthur Fenner, Panton Street, awarded George Medal for moving ammunition train from danger in North Africa – 43 04 21

1943 05 02

44 Years' Railway Service,—Mr. S. B. Carter, signalman, retired on June 5 after 44 years' railway service at Swavesey station. His genial disposition endeared him to his colleagues and traders alike and to mark the occasion they joined in presenting him with a pipe and a suitably inscribed electric clock as a token of their good wishes

1943 08 27

Boy of top of Express, - An amazing story was told to Mr. Lionel Abrahams (Coroner for Hunts.) when he held an inquest in the waiting room at Abbots Ripton Station on Saturday afternoon. The story was that a boy who received fatal injuries whilst climbing along the top of coaches of an express train through being struck by a bridge under which the train was passing, was knocked on to the four-foot way and then run over by two light engines. The boy was 14 years and 10 months old and his home address was at Camberwell. He had been sent, by a juvenile court to an approved school at Darlington. The Coroner said it was clear that deceased met his death from injuries received when he came into contact, with the bridge, and his verdict was 'Accidental death,'

1943 11 05

Plum and Apple from Meldreth. - From Meldreth, a small station on the L;N.E.R., in the heart of the county plum and apple orchards, over 2.000 tons of these fruits have been sent away by train during the recent fruit season, The tonnage is three times greater than the pre-war figure, and fruit merchants in the North of England have not been slow in congratulating the stationmaster at Meldreth on the fact that, in spite of the war-time congestion of the lines, these large quantities have been promptly dispatched, and what is more important for this traffic, have been promptly received

1944 01 11

Farm worker crushed by railway wagon he was about to unload at Black Bank station, Lt Downham – 44 01 11

1944 06 03

Effort to Save Town from Destruction,—Driver Benjamin Gimbert .gave a graphic account on Tuesday of the efforts of himself and his fireman to save a small Cambridgeshire town (Soham) from destruction when they discovered a blazing wagon in their ammunition train. He was giving evidence at the resumed inquest on the two victims of the explosion, which occurred on June 2, completely wrecking the local railway station and causing considerable damage to houses in the town. The blazing wagon, loaded with 500lb bombs, was nearest the engine, and after being uncoupled from 50 other wagons was being driven away when it exploded. The fireman and a signalman lost their lives. "As we approached the station," said the train driver (Driver Gimbert, of March), "I saw a fire in the first truck attached to the engine. The bottom of the wagon was ablaze all over. I asked the fireman to uncouple the blazing truck from the remainder of the train and he uncoupled it. The fireman then rejoined me on the footplate. I thought that by pulling away with the blazing wagon, we could save the in-habitants of the town and the station. That was my main worry. As we neared the signal-box, the signalman, 'Sailor' Bridges, appeared on the platform and I shouted to him to stop the mail train. Before he replied, there was the explosion. I think we had travelled 100 to 150 yards when the explosion occurred." Verdicts of 'Misadventure' were: recorded, tribute being paid to the railwaymen's bravery. – 44 06 03a

1944 07 28

Explosion Heroes Honoured. - Cambridgeshire people will feel a sense of keen satisfaction at the award of the George Cross - the civilian Victoria Cross—to two local men for their heroism in the ammunition train explosion at Soham last month. The awards were announced in the London Gazette. One of the men, Fireman James Nightall; aged 22, of the Hythe, Littleport, lost his life in the explosion. The other, Driver Benjamin Gimbert, aged 42, of 17, Estover Road, March, was severely injured, but was able to travel to Cambridge this week, accompanied by his wife, to receive the congratulations of his superiors on the award. The official citation said: "Gimbert and Nightall were fully aware of the contents of the wagon which was on fire and displayed outstanding courage in endeavouring to isolate it. There is no doubt that if the whole train had been involved, as it would

have been but for the gallant action of the men concerned, there I would have been serious loss of life and property."

1944 08 18

Rector Killed by Tram.—Evidence that a Cambs. rector apparently failed to notice the approach of a train and was cut to pieces was given at an inquest at Great Wilbraham on Friday The victim of the accident, which occurred at an occupation crossing above Six Mile Bottom station on Wednesday evening, was the Rev. Lindsay Lennox Chaplin, rector of Little Wilbraham. It was stated that the train was travelling at between 45 and 50 miles per hour and the deceased's cycle was found 400 yards along the line. The verdict was "Accidental death,"

1944 11 24

To police office in rail truck. — A goods wagon was used by a railwayman late one night to convey a suspected thief to the L.N.E.R. police, office at Cambridge, it was stated at Cambridge Borough Quarter Sessions, when a man was sent to prison for 21 months with hard labour. He was charged with stealing two cartons, containing cigarettes and shoes, together valued at £51 5s. the property of the L.N.E.R. The prosecution described how a railway policeman, on special duty at Coldham's Lane siding heard a noise coming from one of the wagons. He then saw the accused jump out of the wagon, and then stand on a carton, reach into the wagon, take another and put it on the ground beside the first one. As he was fastening the doors, the policeman arrested him.

1944 12 29

Ely woman falls from train, associated with lodger – 44 12 19

1945 06 20

Evacuees go back – cheery picture at Cambridge railway station – 45 06 20

1945 09 10

'Behind the scenes with the railway, problems of the Blitz, Cambridge's special efforts at train control room – details – 45 09 10

1945 04 13

G.P.O. Van Burnt —The N.F.S. were called out at, about tea time on Tuesday to deal with a G.P.O. engineer's van which caught fire, whilst standing in the Cambridge railway station yard. The man in charge of the van was Robert William Benton of 49 Great Eastern Street. Cambridge, and also with him was Ernest Napier, another employee of the G.P.O., who lives at 106, Thoday Street. The men were engaged on work connected with the railway, and it is thought that a blow lamp which was standing near blew up, and ignited the contents of the van. The N.F.S. quickly dealt with the fire, although the body of the van was burnt out. Both men attempted to put the fire out with extinguishers. Mr. Benton received burns to his right hand, and Mr. Napier singed eye brows and hair. Both men were given first aid by the Ambulance Division of the L.N.E.R.

1945 09 10

'Behind the scenes with the railway, problems of the Blitz, Cambridge's special efforts at train control room – details – 45 09 10

1946 09 16

Fire near engine sheds, railway station – 46 09 16

1946 10 05

Magnetic telegraph used to catch thief who boarded train in Cambridge in 1846 – 46 10 05a

1946 10 23

Centenary King's Lynn to Ely railway line commemorated; owing insufficient capital for Ely-Huntingdon line the project abandoned and only a short length built from St Ives station to terminus

on Old North Road, Huntingdon. Failed to pay. East Anglian Company then built a vehicle to convey 60 passengers drawn by horse ridden by postilion with some outside seats for passengers. A special device enabled the 'driver' to disengage the engine from the vehicle when in motion. This continued for some time until steam locomotives again employed – 46 10 23

1946 12 06

Railway station £1.2M plan; double single line from Ely Dock to Soham, restore pre-war standards – 46 12 06

1947 06 02

Yesterday, in the little fen town of Soham, the memory of two railwaymen who three years ago gave their lives that the town might be saved from complete obliteration, was remembered and honoured by Soham people. Local people recalled how in the early hours of June 2nd 1944 fire broke out in an ammunition train standing in Soham station. Driver Benjamin Gimbert of March, and his fireman Mr E. Nightall of Littleport uncoupled the blazing wagon and started to shunt it away from the town. Signalman F. Bridges of Soham was about to warn other rail traffic in the area when the wagon containing high explosive bombs exploded. Soham station was completely wiped out and Nightall and Bridges were killed. On the spot where the station was now stands a pre-fab hut which serves as a booking office, waiting room and control centre. But the match-boarding wall of the hut now bears a brass tablet which tells the story of Soham's escape from destruction

1947 06 13

The road was partially blocked and a single line of traffic caused at Milton road crossing, Cambridge, yesterday when an engine loaded with tanks at the army camp, G.23, ran into the buffers and was carried on to the road. It came to a standstill with the engine projecting across the grass verge. It is understood that the engine began to move whilst each of the 12 trucks was being loaded with a Sherman tank. We understand that the front wheels of the engine were buried in the ground and that the rails are being burnt up. It may be some time before the engine can be lifted off the road by crane.

1947 07 24

Seven members of the Cambridge National Fire Service were at Addenbrooke's Hospital this morning suffering from slight burns from mustard gas sustained in dealing with a fire involving a truck-load of 60 112lb American gas bombs on the railway line between Six Mile Bottom and Fulbourn late last night. The main line between Cambridge and Ipswich was closed to traffic as a result of contamination over 100 yards. Later the damaged wagon was tipped off the rails to the side of the line. The truck was one of a train of 30 to 40 carrying mustard gas bombs from Warren Wood, near Thetford, to Barry in Wales, for dumping in the sea. As it passed through Six Mile Bottom the stationmaster saw that the truck was ablaze. The burning wagon, the third from the engine, was uncoupled, and the engine restarted to pull it away from these. An eye witness said to a "Cambridge Daily News" reporter: "It was a spectacular sight. About fifty per cent of the bombs exploded with a "whoosh" and a burst of flame which shot fifty feet into the air. Poisonous fumes spread over a range of fifty or sixty yards. The police afterwards sealed off an area around the blaze to await decontamination

1947 08 11

A change in command in the National Fire Service in Cambridge and district had just taken place. Divisional Officer J.W. Gibson of Arbury Road, Cambridge has left to take up an appointment in Scotland. In Cambridge two of the outstanding fires he attended were those at Heffer's and Corpus Christi College. But the fire he will remember most vividly is the last he went to - that on the railway line between Fulbourn and Six Mile Bottom recently when a truck load of mustard gas bombs caught fire

1947 11 10

The question of providing access to Cambridge railway station from the east side of the town was mentioned at the Town Council. Coun Amey said that at one time the people of Romsey had a bus

service to the station but that had been taken away. Many railway workers lived in the Romsey area and the lack of any access to the station from that side caused them unnecessary miles of cycling and walking. He considered the 25 per cent of the population of the town should have access to the station. He understood that in the plan for rebuilding the railway station such an access is provided for

1947 12 20

The mustard gas bomb train fire at Six Mile Bottom last July had a sequel on Thursday when two L.N.E.R. drivers, Frederick Smart and William Thorburn, and two firemen, Joseph Westland and Alfred Chandler, all of Cambridge, were presented with the L.N.E.R. Medal. A special goods train included 40 open wagons of mustard gas bombs. When passing Six-Mile-Bottom driver Smart observed a fire in the third wagon. Fireman Chandler jumped down immediately and uncoupled the burning wagon from the rear part of the train. The engine then proceeded forward for 50 yards. The engineers tried to subdue the fire with buckets of water, fully aware of the dangerous nature of the contents of the wagon. 47 12 20

1948 01 02

The question of providing week end leave transport for personnel at the RAF Station, Oakington, evoked a good deal of discussion at the sitting of the Eastern Area Traffic Commissioners. Mr Lainson (for Premier Travel) mentioned that his company sought to provide a new express service from Oakington RAF to King's Cross, London. The proposed fare was 12s.6d return. He also said they were willing to provide a "feeder" service between Oakington and Cambridge Railway Station as his company could not hope to carry 600 odd personnel direct to London. There were approximately 1,100 personnel on the camp and something like 600 were on weekends each week. In view of the limited station transport it was impossible to cater for all the troops by running into Cambridge Railway Station

1948 02 02

The plight of R.A.F. personnel at Bassingbourn, often left waiting in queues at the railway station whilst waiting for transport to be available to take them back to camp after a weekend leave, was mentioned at a sitting of the Eastern Area Traffic Commissioners. Permission was sought for a bus service direct to the camp from London. Whippet Coaches sought to provide a new express service from Bassingbourn to London. The fare would be 10s.6d. The Transport Officer at the camp said that personnel varied between 1,000 and 1,200 and the maximum number on weekend leave between 150 and 200

1948 03 02

At seven o'clock this morning, in very dense fog, a lorry containing 11 German P.O.Ws. crashed broadside into a railway engine and brake van at an accommodation level crossing at Conington, Hunts. Three of the Germans were killed outright - and all the other injured. The injured were placed in another motor vehicle for transport to Peterborough Hospital but when only a few hundred yards down the road this vehicle crashed into a bus. Two more of the Germans have since died and some of the remaining nine are seriously ill. One of the dead is the German doctor who was tending the prisoners injured in the train crash

1948 06 25

Fifty years railway service has been brought to an end by the retirement of Mr S.N. Wright from his post as Station Master at Cambridge. In Sept 1930 he was appointed Yard Master at Whitemoor, the only mechanised marshalling yard in this country, as a replica of the famous Hamm Yard in Germany. He was the first Yard Master to see the new working layout. At the time he took over the up yard had just been completed and the down yard was started the following year. He became Station Master in Cambridge in 1934. Recalling the war years he spoke of the high level of troop trains and special oil trains for the supply of various depots and dromes in East Anglia. During the war he was also Air Raid Master for station, goods and shunting yards, and in addition in charge of the fire watching for the same area

1948 10 23

Everyone will agree that Cambridge is very "full". The railways have had a particularly busy time. "We always prepare for a heavy October", said one official, "but the amount of luggage this term has been abnormal, especially bicycles, which are not easy things to handle in bulk". There is now the record number of 7,500 undergraduates in residence, a thousand more than this time last year. This is accounted for to some extent by the admission of Newnham and Girton to the University, but there are something like 400 more men. "This is a peak year", according to Mr E. Welbourne of Emmanuel, who does not think that a major decrease can be expected until 1951-2

1948 11 01

Cambridgeshire County council planning committee have refused two applications to erect railway carriages as dwellings on the grounds that they "fell below the standard required in any properly planned community". Counc. Mrs Nichols protested against the general trend of planning "teaching us that we cannot do without proper water supplies in place of a good old well as in the days gone by, and that we cannot do without electric light in place of oil lamps. I do hope they will give a few people the liberty to live in the country without these wretched amenities which spoil the view and everything else"

1948 12 17

The platform of the Newmarket railway station was bathed in the glare of arc lights when film cameramen took "location" shots for a forthcoming documentary film. A mobile camera unit was taking shots of a train entering and leaving the station. The "extras" who lined the corridors of the train were European Volunteer Workers about whom the film is being made. Newmarket station, was recently given the title of "the cleanest and most attractive in East Anglia"

1949 06 24

After being in use for more than 100 years, the cast iron arches of the railway bridge over the Ouse half-a-mile south of Huntingdon, are being replaced by a modern steel structure. The policy is to abolish all cast-iron bridges under running roads. A greater tensile strength is needed to meet the demands of 450-tons of express trains hurtling along at great speeds. The arrangements began in March when the lines across the bridges were closed to traffic. It is hoped the lines will be open again in October

1949 07 13

Yesterday was a typical hot-weather day in the life of the Cambridgeshire fire service. They had no fewer than nine calls, mostly to grass fires. They went to a fire at Church St, Willingham where a heap of manure had caught alight. At 6.19 pm a call was received from the Willows, near Barnold crossing, Waterbeach, where there is a considerable quantity of peat land. The railway embankment there has been alight for about a month now and the fire brigade was called to prevent it from spreading to the crops. The firemen were out all night and were still there this morning

1949 09 23

Miss Janet Hubbard of Ely, Britain's new Railway Queen, was given a tumultuous send-off when she left Ely railway station in preparation for her crowning at Manchester. She was the centre of a pleasing little ceremony in the stationmaster's office, which was crowded with railway employees who gathered to pay their congratulations. All felt proud that Britain's railway queen had been chosen from Ely. Mr H.H. Smith, stationmaster, told her "You must be the envy of some thousands of young railway ladies in this country. I am sure Ely is most honoured, and your mother and father must be very proud of your success". Railway employees thronged the platform to proclaim their best wishes.

1950 05 10

Two Cambridge railwaymen, driver John Collingwood and guard Alfred Palmer have been awarded the "Daily Herald" Order of Industrial Heroism. The rescue which won them the "Workers VC" was made just a year ago at the Air Ministry's private siding at Lord's Bridge. Coming round a blind

corner a goods train collided with a RAF motor lorry loaded with bombs. The driver was knocked unconscious and trapped in his cab; the petrol tank was smashed and petrol splashed onto the bonnet which was smoking fiercely. Several bombs fell off the lorry and rolled towards a pool of petrol. Despite the danger the railwaymen ran to the lorry, released the driver, lifted him out of the cab and carried him to safety.

1951 05 26

Sir Harold Gray of Gog Magog Hills, Cambridge, died in the South of France. He was elected Conservative MP for Cambridgeshire in 1922 but did not stand in the 1923 election. He was a noted breeder of bloodstock at his estate and for many years ran horses with considerable success. During the war Sir Harold and his wife, Rowena, worked continually in France in the hospitals for the care of the wounded and he also drove his own motor ambulance there for the French Red Cross.

1951 06

To most the mention of a railway waiting room conjures up a vision of a dismal, dingy place. But that at Cambridge station is a very different state of affairs – in fact such a bright and cheerful room that I felt it would be quite a pleasure to lose one's train and have to sit there and wait for another! The colour scheme is a bright green and cream and the old-fashioned leather bench type seats have been replaced by small brown leather armchairs. In the ladies' waiting-room one beholds the astonishing sight of fresh flowers.

1951 06 29

Two railwaymen whose prompt action averted serious damage being caused to a goods train were commended for their action. Driver C.V. Bloy and Fireman L.R. Gardiner of Cambridge each received a cheque for two guineas. The incident took place at Elsenham when Driver Bloy noticed that one of the wagons of his train was on fire. He immediately stopped and isolated it from the rest of the train. They stopped another train and asked the driver to use his slacker pipe to damp the fire on the wagon. In view of their action more serious damage was averted, bearing in mind that a number of petrol wagons were included in the train.

1951 08 17

For the past four years Ganger S.J. Ginn and his Warren Hill, Newmarket railway gang have won first prize for the best length of railway line in the Cambridge region. Mr Ginn, who started as a plate-layer 24 years ago, praised the first-class quality of the men with whom he works. Neatness, level nature of the track and straightness or evenness of the rails were amongst the points for which the judges were looking. The almost total absence of weeds and the tidiness of huts also impressed them.

1951 08 18

For the fourth year in succession Longstanton railway station has won the British Railways special prize for the best station garden. Months of preparation were carried out by two gardeners – the Station Master (Mr A.E. Clarke) and his porter, old-age-pensioner Mr A. White. "We had to keep it up to scratch all the time because we never knew when to expect the judges", he said. Altogether 255 stations entered for the competition.

1951 11 24

Foxton station became a film set on Friday afternoon and the 2.08 pm Cambridge to London express was the chief "prop". Instead of making its usual straight through run the train stopped at the station so that a scene could be shot for a documentary film being made for the Anglo-Iranian Oil Company. It tells the story of a young apprentice officer in the Merchant Navy and his life on an oil tanker. Taking the role is Roger Stokes of Foxton Hall who is actually an apprentice officer, and the scene shows him saying farewell to his parents as he leaves for London. The film will be presented in connection with recruiting drives.

1951 12 20

Cambridge undergraduates are acting as porters at Cambridge railway station to help cope with the "very heavy" Christmas postal parcel traffic. Temporary porters are paid daily on the basis of £5 10s.6d for a 44-hour week. The Post Office staff handle all letter mails, but only deliver the parcel traffic to the station, where it is handled by rail personnel. On Sunday and Christmas day there will be certain local withdrawals and additions to passenger services and on Boxing Day there will be nine additional afternoon and evening passenger trains to London.

1952 01 11

Cambridge Council agreed to include a £75,000 scheme for a sub-way approach to the railway station; thousands of people would benefit from it and it could take the place of another item on the priority list - £150,000 for a multi-deck car park. Coun H.C. Ridgeon said it would mean a tremendous saving to traffic from Hills Road and Mill Road and prove a great advantage to the town as a whole. Ald Briggs vigorously supported the suggestion to make it a top priority and pointed to the present "nightmare congestion" to press the need.

1952 02 09

Long before the arrival of the ten-coach funeral train bearing the body of King George VI, large crowds had gathered at the main vantage points along the line at Ely to pay their homage. At the station crossing hundreds of people assembled on both sides, whilst lines of traffic extended for some distance. Heads were bared as the train rolled smoothly through the station. Workmen who had given up part of their dinner hour and American servicemen were amongst the crowds. At the little village station of Waterbeach about 100 housewives, farmworkers and children gathered. A crowd of more than 800 people lined the marshalling yards on either side of Mill Road Bridge, Cambridge. The long black funeral coach, with all its windows blacked out passed exactly on time. Queen Elizabeth II gazed pensively out of a carriage window as the train passed a group of railwaymen standing caps off near Hills Road Bridge.

1952 02 09

The Royal Train bearing the King's body from Wolferton to King's Cross had two local men as its crew. The driver was Mr S. Harding who first drove the Royal train when the King came down to Trinity, and the fireman Mr C. Pearman from Weston Colville. Also on the train, as fitter, was Mr W.H. Simmons of Kelvin Close, Cambridge. Another local link is that the stationmaster at Wolferton, Mr Bernard Hodge, was formerly in charge of Whittlesford Station. At Cambridge South signal box The Welbeck Abbey, a Sandringham class engine, spick and span in polished olive green, was one of three trains standing by on the route in case of breakdown on the journey

1952 04 24

Cambridgeshire National Farmers Union heard with satisfaction that the Railway Executive had agreed to operate the 5.27 p.m. Histon to Kettering goods rated soft fruit train this season. It was particularly in the interest of local strawberry growers to keep this train in operation but if it is not fully used it will not be possible to provide a similar service next year.

1952 06 07

A Brampton man was a member of a party seeing off a newly-married couple at Huntingdon Railway station. As a joke he chalked on the carriage the words: "Just married. Gone to his doom". But chalking on railway carriages is illegal and he found himself before magistrates "for wantonly defacing" a vestibule coach, the property of the Railway Executive. He was convicted & fined the cost of washing down, cleaning & repainting the coach, which was 15s. It was not the railway authority's wish to be spoilsports and stop a bit of fun but there had been quite a bit of this chalking and the prosecution might act as a deterrent.

1952 07 12

Mr A.H. Bailey recalls: "July 6th 1893 was the wedding day of the young and charming Princess May of Teck and the Sailor Prince George, afterwards King George V. It was arranged to present an address to the Royal couple when the train conveying them to Sandringham halted at Cambridge

station and the 3rd (Cambs) Battalion, Suffolk regiment was to furnish a Guard of Honour on the platform. I had the almost unbelievable luck in being selected for the Guard and never was pipeclay and metal polish so well applied nor such pride beneath a scarlet tunic". Later the cavalier, still exalted by the infinitesimal fraction of a Royal Bride's smile, and wearing his uniform trousers, met a young demure maid on Parker's Piece. "One day", he writes, "I shall ask my wife whether it was the red stripe on my nether garment or the fireworks that brought favour in her eyes".

1953 04 09

A goods engine crashed through the buffer stops at Coldham's Bridge, Cambridge. The buffer stops were completely demolished and the engine buried itself up to the footplate in soft earth. The driver and fireman were both admitted to Addenbrooke's Hospital with slight injuries. Before the engine could be moved the boiler had to be emptied to lessen the weight. A 45-ton crane was needed to drag it backwards across a platform of sleepers until it was replaced on the rails. Work was hampered by the soggy ground and the presence of overhead telegraph wires.

1953 04 20

The circus has come to town – and it was greeted by thousands of smiling Cambridge faces. Six of Bertram Mills' Burmese elephants marched from the railway station, trunk to tail as the midget clown, Nikki, distributed leaflets about the circus from the basket of his fairy cycle. Elephants Lechney and Company did not lose their way – they've taken the same stroll for the last 18 years. Crowds covered the roundabout at Hills Road. The one at the Four Lamps was unrecognisable, the circus-gazers had swept half-way across the road. Soon afterwards the 'two-ton-tessies; were under canvas, chained to a platform.

1953 11 03

A wartime German bomb was discovered 30 feet from the Mildenhall railway line at Exning Halt, near Burwell. For over 11 years trains had passed the spot, blissfully unaware that hidden less than a foot beneath the ground was a bomb large enough to cause an unpleasant explosion. It was found by John Debenham who was ploughing a field when he struck something which broke a peg in his plough. "We soon realised it was a bomb and thought of pulling it out with a chain", he said. But instead he reported it to the police.

1953 11 16

Premier Travel and Percival Motors have applied to combine their express carriage services from Cambridge to Oxford. They have been competing on the route since 1951. During term time there was mostly University traffic and in summer a great deal of tourists. The University World Service, said the new service would be of great convenience to students from abroad, many of whom toured England after coming to Cambridge to study. The Eastern Counties, Associated Motorways and United Counties bus companies and the City of Oxford Motor Services opposed the application as did the Railway Executive who said the bulk of the Cambridge-Oxford traffic was moving by rail via Bletchley.

1954 02 08

A large new railway depot is to be established at Chesterton sidings. One area equipped with two Goliath cranes will store new and second-hand rails and emergency stock; another will refettle serviceable switches and crossing units while a third will be equipped for the mechanised pre-assembly, loading and despatch of complete lengths of plain line for permanent way renewals. There will also be dismantling and sleeper areas together with a chair and smalls area and a flash butt welding plant. New access roads will be built together with a canteen.

1954 07 19

The Minister's decision on the County Development Plan has been announced. The only major Cambridge items not approved are the site of the bus station between Christ's college & Emmanuel and the proposed development for residential purposes of the smallholding land north of Arbury Road. All the central area road proposals including the 'spine relief road', the new Guildhall Street

and a cross-town route joining Emmanuel Street with Downing Street have been approved together with the new Chesterton Bridge over the Cam near Walnut Tree Avenue, a multi-storey car park in Corn Exchange Street and a subway at the railway station.

1954 07 21

The attention of county planners has been drawn to a press report setting out proposals by the British Transport Commission to establish a new railway depot at Chesterton. At no time have they given any indication of these intentions; indeed the council has pressed for the reduction of railway activities on this site. It is clear that the arrangements are so far advanced that there is no likelihood of them being held up or abandoned at this late stage. When completed the depot will require a large additional labour force, which is clearly in contradiction to the agreed industrial policy for Cambridge. Future schemes should be discussed well in advance with the planners and the matter will be placed in the hands of local Members of Parliament.

1954 07 23

Various Newport people gave evidence at the inquiry into a footpath crossing the railway line. Mr George Poulter who had lived in the village since 1892 said he had been along the path with a horse and cart many times and never found the railway gates locked. Joseph Moule, 73, said it used to be a noted walk for parents and children while George Webb, 77, said lots of people used the path. But Mrs Myrtle Gentry said she had been stopped in 1940 and told it was not a public footpath. It was clearly marked on the OS map but the owner of a bungalow and the railway authorities had raised objections.

1954 08 13

Mr Leonard Dix told the enquiry he had bought land on both sides of the railway track at Newport in 1924 and built a bungalow. There was no public right of way and no stiles. He received keys for two gates adjoining the railway track and padlocks on the gates were supplied by the railway company. Postmen used to climb the gates to take letters but one day a new postman brought a bicycle and asked that the gate be unlocked. In 1928 a man walked over the crossing; he told him it was not a right of way and he did not come again. But the inspector judged that there was nothing to stop people from using the path; the evidence was complicated but by usage it had become a public right of way

1954 10 27

Railway engines seem to be making a habit of running off the lines into the cottage garden of the crossing keeper at Coldham's Lane, Cambridge. For the second time in recent months a goods locomotive has gone astray there when the engine travelling light (without wagons) made a mess of his well-kept plot. The large crane used in lifting the heavy vehicle was brought to the scene and the engine was lifted back on to the line. Dislocation to other traffic was very light.

1954 12 06

The Government has partially allowed an appeal by Moss (Cambridge) Ltd over two advertising boards displayed at first floor level on a shop in Hills Road. It says that one of them seriously detracts from the appearance of the building. The premises are at a busy junction in a mixed locality. On the opposite side are two large garages and a parade of shops. To the north the road crosses over the railway and adjoining the bridge are the rail goods yards and the market. There are large advertising hoardings on each side of the bridge and numerous other advertisements on buildings in the vicinity

1955 03 04

British Railways had considered closing the Cambridge-Mildenhall line because of its steady loss in revenue and uneconomic running costs. But now they hope that by the introduction of two-car diesel units and cheaper fares they can make the line a paying proposition. But people in Isleham had to walk to the station and in some instances this was three miles away; others had to go to Kennett station. They wanted convenience and had petitioned for a bus service. Messrs Murfet's would provide a bus into Cambridge for those who wished to shop or visit the cattle market; it would also serve Chippenham and Snailwell. 55 03 04

1955 03 28

Stationmasters were told that they have been Cinderellas for long enough and should take everything that is coming. It would take some time before modernisation could fully come into being but next year a scheme will start in Cambridge for a diesel yard. Electrification will take place in due course, but must take its place with other urgent schemes. People were always complaining about the lack of courtesy on the railways and very few letters of appreciation were received. 55 03 28

1955 05 13

British Railway's new weedkiller train can cover up to 100 miles of track a day and recently made the Ely-March run handing out lethal doses of weed-killing concentrate at up to 20 mph. It is operated by two Cambridge men, Bob Lee and Jack Aldhouse. Working away from home has its disadvantages but their living accommodation is as luxurious as any caravan with interior-sprung mattresses, dining room, galley and chemical lavatory. Jack attends to the living accommodation and Arthur keeps an eye on the machinery. 55 05 13 b & c

1955 09 14

Proposals to close Foxton railway station whilst keeping Harston open – which was used even less – drew protests from Councillors. During September 60 passengers used the station each week but this was a bad month for travel and prohibitive fares were the reason for the small number of passengers. Alternative bus services were far from adequate and there would be no prospect of halting the drift from the countryside to the town if the station closed. There was a great deal of development planned, which would result in a growth of population. 55 09 14

1955 10 13

For the passengers on the Cambridge to Kettering train it was a normal journey; but for the guard, Archie Sear of Cambridge it brought an end to a career lasting 50 years on the railway, 23 of them on the Kettering line. He became a familiar figure to regular travellers and gained the title of 'The Varsity Guard'. He has had a remarkably smooth career and has never been asked to look after anything more unusual than dogs, kittens and schoolchildren. The train has remained accident-free and he has never had anything unusual to report – which in itself is extraordinary. 55 10 13

1956 02 07

A revolutionary new kind of rail transport has been the centre of attraction at Cambridge Railway Station. The huge shining dark green diesel-engined unit is unlike the traditional train. It has higher speed, greater comfort and a complete absence of smoke. The drivers cab looks more like a scientist's workshop than the dirty, greasy footplate and the carriages resemble long-distance buses with electric devices which circulate hot air during cold weather and cooling breezes in the summer. 56 02 07a & b & c

1956 04 10

Station masters were told that the railways had suffered from lack of capital. Following nationalisation far too much power had been taken away and there should be a closer integration of the operating, commercial and motive power departments. It was 'unfair' to the public for railways to close certain branch lines that were a 'dead weight' on their financial resources, but you can't have it both ways. There had been a number of complaints and they had become the subject of music hall jokes on the wireless, lasted in the press and lampooned in cartoons. 56 04 10a

1956 09 01

Last year Cambridge station sent over 900,000 people safely on their way, another 1,000 a day were transferred from one train to another without passing through the ticket barriers. During rush periods they can send 'The Fenman' on its way only two minutes after arriving although hundreds of passengers get on and off and scores of parcels taken from brake vans. In the telegraph office where the most up-to-date teleprinters and signalling equipment are installed, 1,300 telegrams and 1,200 phone messages a day are dealt with. 56 09 01-a-b

1956 12 08

Christmas tree in railway station entrance – 56 12 08a

1957 01 26

Cambridge Civil Defence ambulance section carried out a successful exercise in rendering first aid to the injured. It was assumed a serious railway accident had taken place near the Eastern Gas Board sidings in Coldham's Lane. Casualties were evacuated to Swann's Yard Civil Defence Rescue Site where the Hospital Nursing Mobile First Aid Unit, under Dr C. Attwood, set up a Receiving Centre. 57 01 26

1957 06 07

A Cambridge biologist found radio-active particles in samples of air he took near his house in St Barnabas Road. He claimed it was contaminated by smoke from the railway and contained minute particles of dirt which harboured germs. He sought a reduction on his rating assessment from £46 to £35. 57 06 07c

1957 06 18

Main line trains were diverted through Saffron Walden while the iron bridge near Great Chesterford was replaced. For weeks the road under the bridge has been closed while the steel girders were built into the form of a pre-fabricated bridge. Then by an ingenious piece of engineering the entire section, weighing many tons, was trundled forward on two specially-laid sets of rails. 57 06 18a

1957 07 13

Railway modernisation plan – photos – 57 07 13 & a

1957 11 01

British Railways modernisation plans involve conversion from steam to diesel traction. A diesel instruction train has come to Cambridge where it will be open for inspection by drivers, firemen and fitters. It consists of two coaches including a complete set of driver's controls and a room with cinema projectors where lectures are given by the Resident Instructor. When it was at March 523 people visited with a record attendance at one of the lectures. 57 11 01

1957 12 06

A Greville Road resident gained a rate reduction because of the railway. He complained of "great clouds of belching smoke, very unpleasant to breathe, at all hours of day and night". Shunting noises during the night woke residents and the obnoxious smells coming from trucks left standing in the sidings were especially objectionable at mealtimes. The "sooty and sulphurous atmosphere" made the properties deteriorate before their time and layers of soot in the gardens choked plants. 57 12 06a

1957 12 19

Great Eastern House, the new British Railways office in Tenison Road, is a functional modern building with the high standard of architectural design necessitated in a University city. Shaped like a vast cube, its tiers of windows catch the light row upon row. Inside is the railwayman's dream. Gone are the rickety stairs, the walls in green or chocolate and cramped offices with old-fashioned coal fires. Instead there is light, ivory-coloured walls and glass partitions, a lecture room, bar and two billiard tables. 57 12 19a, b, c, d

1957 12 19

Railway modernisation means that steam-hauled passenger services will soon be replaced with modern two-car diesel trains. They will be maintained at a new up-to-date diesel depot being erected in Coldham's Lane. In addition to great efficiency this will eliminate the smoke nuisance in built-up areas. 57 12 19e & f & g

1958 01 24

A derailment in the Coldham's Lane arrival sidings, visible from Mill Road Bridge, attracted a good deal of public attention yesterday. Engine, tender and three wagons of a goods train came off the rails while the train was moving at reduced speed into the sidings. The driver and firemen got clear but the guard suffered some facial bruises. 58 01 24a

1958 06 13

A B45 Tornado light bomber crashed almost immediately after taking off on an unauthorised flight from the USAF base at Alconbury. The man flying the aircraft, who was killed, was a mechanic who had had no flight training. Wreckage from the aircraft blocked the main railway line at Abbots Ripton. The incident occurred ten minutes after a USAF jet trainer, also from Alconbury, and an RAF Canberra bomber collided in mid-air and crashed near Spaldwick. 58 06 13

1958 06 27

At Haverhill 40 people were evacuated after flood water poured through their homes following a night of torrential rain. People were warned to boil all water as a precaution against contamination of the town's water supplies. Passengers arriving at the railway station were stranded as part of a wall along the River Stour had fallen; as it continued to rise, police sealed off the town centre. Flooding stretched for a radius of two miles and many cars were submerged in their garages. 58 06 27

1958 07 03

German-build lightweight diesel engines will shortly go into service on Eastern Region branch lines. Based at Cambridge they will be used initially on the Witham-Maldon, Witham-Braintree and Audley-End- Bartlow services. Each rail-bus provides seating for 56 passengers and standing room for a further 40. Powered by a 150 h.p. engine, it has a six-speed gearbox and can attain a speed of 55 mph. 58 07 03

1958 08 04

I journeyed to Cottenham recently and was mentally steeling myself for that endless succession of right-angled bends through Histon village. Instead I found a well aligned bypass starting a short distance on the Cottenham side of the 'Chivers' railway crossing and missing Histon village completely. Whoever built this wonderful stretch of road must have kept it very quiet for not even the gas, water and electricity people have dug little holes in its virgin surface. It will make the task of those hauling guided missiles into the secret depths of the Fens much easier! Until now those Histon bends must have looked formidable. 58 08 04

1958 08 30

British Railways Eastern Region announces the closure of Earith Bridge Station on the St Ives to Ely line from Monday October 6th. Alternative facilities for parcels and freight traffic are available at Bluntisham, Somersham, Sutton and Haddenham stations. 58 08 30d

1958 09 10

Ronald Jackson is a locomotive fireman who lives in a house between the railway lines at Shepreth Junction. Although it has no gas or electricity and only well water it has very deep foundations and is absolutely solid. I watched as a passenger train rolled up as if it was heading straight through the sitting-room window, but it swung off towards King's Cross without a quiver from the contents of the china cabinet near the window. His family would not change it. 58 09 10

1958 10 25

The era of smoky trains has gone and the "dieselisation" of Cambridge railway services comes into operation today. Passengers will travel in fast, clean and comfortable two-car light-weight diesel trains with accommodation for 103 second-class and 12 first-class passengers. The return fair to Peterborough has been halved and journey time reduced. For too long railways have suffered from old equipment and services planned for the steam age; it is not 'jam tomorrow', it is jam today, a rail official promised. 58 10 25 & a

1958 11 04

Diesel trains inaugural run Cambridge to Peterborough – 58 11 04 & a

1958 12 05

Two airmen from Oakington airfield had miraculous escapes when their Vampire jet trainer crashed on the main railway line bordering the airfield and skidded 200 yards across a ploughed field. The plane had taken off from the main runway when its engine failed. It rapidly lost height and at 100 mph hit the main 'down' Cambridge-Huntingdon railway line, shedding its undercarriage before knocking down fences and coming to rest. Both lines were blocked for half an hour but workmen soon had the damage repaired. 58 12 05

1958 12 19

Traffic over Hills Road Railway Bridge, a bottleneck on the principal road into Cambridge, is extremely heavy. Visibility over the summit is severely restricted and many accidents have occurred there. The existing steel plate girder bridge has deteriorated with age and now work will start to provide a new twin two-lane carriageways and footpaths. The new bridge will be designed to allow for widening should additional railway tracks be needed in the future. 58 12 19b

1959 01 06

Great Eastern Railway now offers a service which is second to none. Speedy and comfortable trains leave at regular minutes past the hour and take the same time to reach their destination. Fast services have open up East Anglia to the man who was forced to journey by road – and it is no better than the rest of the country in its trunk road network. Now those who previously used cars must now ask themselves whether it is really worthwhile driving. 59 01 06

1959 01 13

The widening of Hills Road Railway Bridge may be delayed as negotiations have still to be completed on what proportion of the cost will be borne by the County Council. The East side of the new bridge should run straight from the frontage line of no.129 Hills Road to the entrance of the coal-yard opposite the junction with Brooklands Avenue. There could be a new access from Cherry Hinton Road to the Cattle Market and railway sidings. 59 01 13d

1950 03 18

St Ives – Kettering railway line closure plans – 59 03 18

1959 03 31

Sit – I must say something about the lighting at Fulbourn station. In these days of 'modernisation' of the railways it seems incredible that they still use oil lamps as the sole source of illumination. Apart from the obvious difficulties of trying to walk along a platform in pitch darkness, it is extremely difficult to see whether one is producing a ticker for the ticket-collector or just a piece of paper – Timothy Oldcastle. 59 03 31c

1959 03 31

The progressive dieselisation of the branch line services has seen the construction of a maintenance depot near Coldham's Lane Bridge. It affords facilities for carrying out examinations for multiple unit trains, rail-buses and diesel-mechanical and diesel-electric shunters. It is open 24 hours a day, seven days a week and has a staff of 100 men. 59 03 31d & e

1959 04 18

St Ives – Kettering railway line closure – 59 04 18

1959 05 27

British Railways announce that passenger train services between St Ives and Kettering and the freight train services from Buckden and Grafham stations will be withdrawn on June 15th. In addition trains running between Cambridge and St Ives on weekdays which at present serve Kettering will also be withdrawn. Arrangements will be made to augment the service to St Ives by the 10.17 am Cambridge

to Peterborough train calling at Histon, Oakington, Longstanton and Swavesey stations and an additional train leaving for St Ives at 5.15pm calling at all stations. 59 05 27a

1959 06 25

Oxford-Cambridge railway line closure objections – 59 06 25

1959 08 14

A small gang of men who, in fair weather and foul, tend the two miles of track from Ely railway station to the Lynn cross gates at Adelaide have received awards for the best-maintained class 'B' track. They are ganger L.W. Akred, lengthmen G. Clark, R. Harrison and S. Thorby and sub-ganger H.V. Pearson. Permanent way inspectors have their own competition which was won by Mr S. Ginn of Ely who has control of 14 gangs between Ely and Stoke Ferry. 59 08 14a

1959 09 07

A new Continental-style level crossing has been installed at Tivetshall, Norfolk. It is operated automatically from the signal box on the Norwich to London railway line. A motorist who is held up can inform the signal man that he wants to cross by pressing a push-button by the side of the barrier. If his crossing is urgent he can inform the signalman by means of a telephone which has been installed. This 'push-button' level crossing is believed to be the first in the country. 59 09 07

1959 11 04

Reuben Taylor, who has been Cambridge Station Master since 1948, has hung up his top hat and frock coat for the last time. He started as a junior clerk at Haverhill station in 1910 and has seen immense changes. When he first took over at Cambridge some 700,000 passengers a year went through his hands. Last year it was double, to say nothing of the tremendous increase in parcel and freight traffic. "Road transport will never take the place of railways: we get no end of people coming into Cambridge from the country and leaving their cars at the station park before catching trains to London", he said. 59 11 04c

1960 01 15

Two men were killed when a five-ton lorry owned by the Great Ouse River Board was in collision with a two-coach diesel train on a farm-service crossing between Isleham and Worlington. The front of the train was badly smashed and passengers severely shaken. Rescue workers were hampered by icy roads leading to the Lee Farm crossing, which is in a very isolated position. The line is now open under caution as the permanent way is damaged. 60 01 15

1960 01 18

Oakington railway station is one of the busiest in the area: 80 trains pass daily, 14 of them stopping passenger trains. However many RAF passengers from Oakington airfield find it easier to reach their living quarters from Long Stanton station and services can be disrupted by plane crashes. Large quantities of fruit are still sent 'up North' but there is increasing competition from road haulage firms. One farmer says he prefers the rail as the fresh air blowing through the trucks helps to keep the fruit fresh. But the station suffered when a large local farming concern changed hands and nearly 700 tons of sugar beet was not grown. 60 01 18a & b

1960 02 19

Three sections of disused railway lines might be used in connection with the construction of future new roads in Huntingdonshire. They are the line and bridge from Bluntisham to Earith on the St Ives-Earith-Ely branch line, the bridge over the Great Ouse between St Ives station and the level crossing on the B1040 and the line and bridges from Huntingdon to Kimbolton. But councillors see no use for the line from Ramsey East station to Warboys. 60 02 19a

1960 03 22

Railway Traveller's Guide history 60 03 22

1960 04 28

Costs of building the new Hills Road railway bridge have increased by £20,000 because unusually difficult ground conditions mean it needs deeper and more substantial foundations. But the County Council hopes to construct a bridge over the level crossing on the Cambridge Road at Histon. It will mean the demolition of five houses and affect the gardens of 17 other properties as well as the complete rebuilding of the Histon nursery school. 60 04 28

1960 05 13

The change from steam to diesel at the Cambridge railway depot has transformed train drivers' lives. The rattling, hissing, gritty foot-plate - where in cold weather they were frozen on one side and baked on the other - has been exchanged for the enclosed windowed cabin of the new engines with its upholstered driver's seat and armrests, its foot warmers, compact controls and ashtray. Driver William Creek who worked with steam for 40 years says it used to be rough – his insides were shaken up by the rattling. There was a wooden seat but it was more comfortable standing up. Fellow drivers William Thulborn and Sidney Hutton agree. – 60 05 13b

1960 06 21

It took twenty men twenty hours at the week-end to demolish Cambridge's old Hills Road Bridge – twice as long as the contractors had anticipated. Originally it was thought that the removal of 140 tons of steel girders would take a little over eight hours, but the trains passing underneath proved a little more troublesome than expected. The men took advantage of the frequent breaks to wipe the sweat from their brows and light a cigarette. The scene resembled firework night for, as the oxyacetylene guns cut through the girders, a spray of red hot sparks would fall on the ground giving an impression of a 'golden rain' 60 06 21

1960 07 18

A four day manhunt for 'Gipsy Jack' ended when he was found in a secret hideout inside his mother's hut in the gipsy encampment near Oakington where he had been since he shot and battered a woman in the corner of a cornfield. Superintendent John du Rose of Scotland Yard realised the old railway carriage was shorter inside than out and pulled away a chest of drawers from an old wooden partition. But 'Gipsy Jack' shot himself in the head with a shotgun before police could break in. 60 07 18a 60 07 14 60 07 18 60 07 18a

1960 08 06

Mill Road Railway Bridge was built in 1889 and Percy North, the well-known chiropodist, remembers playing under the bridge arches when they were being constructed. There was a level crossing over the railway then but it was not much used because there was hardly any traffic. There was nothing beyond, Great Eastern Street and Argyle Street were just ballast pits for the railway and the only house was a large one where the Broadway stands today, he recalls. 60 08 06 & a

1960 09 01

The Cambridge to Colchester railway line becomes a single track beyond Shelford and winds down the river Stour into Suffolk through a series of little country stations which make it one of the prettiest railway journeys in East Anglia. The canopied platforms of Linton, Haverhill, Sturmer, Stoke, Clare and Cavendish fit picturesquely into the landscape. A four-horned Jacob ram journeyed in the luggage van on its way to Wales to be crossed with a mountain sheep. Labelled, it travelled alone as a parcel. It was joined at Stoke by a bicycle and by a baby in her pram accompanied by her parents. But the guard said it was not big enough to carry all the parcels. 60 09 01b & c

1960 09 02

Bridge over railway track between Shelford and Bartlow – 60 09 02

1960 08 02

Whittlesford new bypass road bridge from railway station – 60 09 02b

1960 09 03

Barnwell Junction seems the perfect model of a small Victorian railway station with its lacy wooden canopy and the initials of the Great Eastern Railway intertwined among the cast iron legs of its platform seats. It has two passenger trains a day but handles 30,000 tons of merchandise and minerals a year including sugar beet, grain and potatoes, malt from Barnwell Maltings and scrap iron from the railway's own engineering depot. It's one porter, Mr Bidwell keeps the platform swept and is also gardener, handyman and weekly replenisher of the oil lamps in the semaphore signals. 60 09 03b

1960 09 14

Soham railway crossing Middlemere – 60 09 14

1960 09 28

Ely's new railway station room provides plush comfort. Gone are the drab walls, the hard bench type seats, big tables in the centre of the room and the lack of warmth. The old, smoking fireplaces have been replaced by infra-red push-button heaters which stay on for fifteen minutes. Now passengers can rest in an atmosphere of ease and near luxury. There is fluorescent lighting, tasteful interior finishing and beautiful lithographs including 'The road to Thaxted' by Edward Bawden. It is the finest waiting room in the Eastern Region 60 09 28a

1960 10 07

The railway crossing at Six Mile Bottom is a dangerous 'black spot'. During peak holiday periods as many as 1,500 cars an hour use the crossing, which closes 40 times a day. A British Railways policeman is on duty on race days and the number of lights on the gate is greater than specified. But many cars travel at 70 mph and do not see it until the last minute. Four or five vehicles have crashed through the gates in the last five years. A bridge is to be built 'sooner or later' 60 10 07c

1960 12 09

'The Cambridge Late Arrivals' group was set up to co-ordinate the indignation rail travellers felt during the upheaval of electrification. Now the trains are much more comfortable and carriages have the air of a club-room. Men – some 200 of them – willingly pay £9 15s (£9.75) for a monthly season ticket and the privileged of leading a quieter family life in the province. It is still cheaper to make the daily journey and avoid the great expense of finding a house or flat in London. 60 12 09a

1960 12 16

Cottenham's part-time firemen give up a good deal of their leisure time to training and spend every Sunday morning in practice. They are mostly mature, married men and the pay is slender. They respond to about three incidents every fortnight including laborious peat fires near the railway embankments where there is as much digging as fire-fighting with the danger of falling into deep, smouldering loam. There is also an ever-present danger from the aircraft leaving and entering the two nearby airfields. The converted lorry formerly used as a fire engine, carrying a 400 gallon water tank, has been replaced with a streamlined vehicle developed for their special needs. 60 12 16

1960 12 17

A diesel engine pulling a trainload of coal leaped from the track at Stretham Fen in the early hours and plunged down a ten-foot embankment, trapping the driver and fireman. They were freed from the wreckage of the cab which was crushed as it ploughed into the soft earth, and taken to hospital. Investigators believe the crash was caused by a swaying wagon on a 60 mph parcels express which hit the 45 mph coal train. Eight wagons containing Christmas parcels jumped from the rails, ripping up tracks and bringing down telephone wires. Nearly 100 railwaymen worked to clear the main Cambridge to Ely line. 60 12 17 track back to normal – 60 12 19b

1960 12 17

Hills Road Railway Bridge is functioning almost as normal again. After a year's work during which the traffic has had to contend with considerable difficulties, the road is now suitable for two-lane

traffic. Resurfacing will not be carried on for another 12 months in order to allow for subsidence and for several more weeks workmen will be patching up. Work on Churchill College continues as does work on 13 three-storey terrace houses and 60 maisonettes at East Road. Most have their roofs on and one block of houses has its windows in. 60 12 17b

1961 02 04

Rail passengers had a narrow escape when a car was driven straight through Cambridge station booking hall and came to rest with its front wheels on the platform. Ticket collector Mr W. Franklin was standing in his booth by the barrier at the time and was taken to hospital suffering from shock. An undergraduate who had driven to meet a friend from the train failed to swing round in front of the booking hall and burst through the right-hand door smashing the indicator board and barrier gate before coming to a standstill. It is 12 years since a similar accident involving a taxi driver occurred at the station. 61 02 04 photo 61 02 06a

1961 02 17

Competition between British Railways agricultural transport services has become increasingly fierce and many local farmers are faced with the difficult decision whether to transport their produce by rail, road or, in some cases, water. Gerald Fairey, a Linton farmer says there is far less difficulty in sending goods by road. And lorry drivers take more care with the handling of perishable goods than the railway. But hauliers cannot compete with the ridiculously low cut-rate prices charged by British Railways for the conveyance of goods. The new 'Fenland Freighter' diesel-hauled train offers door-to-door service and a big saving in time and cash 61 02 17c

1961 03 14

Gerald Tweedie of Cherry Hinton Road has assured himself a place in the railway history of this country. He can now call himself Britain's Number One Train Spotter as he has seen, listed and made notes on every one of the 60,000 or so steam railway engines operated during the last 30 years – the first man ever to have completed such a mammoth task. Now the CDN has arranged for him to have a ride on the footplate of an A4 streamlined Pacific engine 61 03 14

1961 04 21

A motorist who drove his car through the booking hall of Cambridge Railway Station and crashed into its exit gateway pleaded not guilty to careless driving and driving a vehicle with inefficient brakes. William Franklin said he was collecting tickets at the station barrier when he turned round and saw the car in the hall, one man buying a ticket was knocked down. The driver said he was going to meet a train but his brakes failed as he approached the station and he was placed in a terrible dilemma. He changed down to second gear but as there were people by the side of the entrance hall he decided to drive straight through. As it was a mechanical failure he was given an absolute discharge. 61 04 21b

1961 08 30

A length of abandoned railway line is to be used for a new 'fly-under' junction as part of the modernisation of the Great North Road. The village of Buckden lies astride the trunk road which is narrow and winding. Now a short by-pass will be constructed to the west of the High Street. It will have a dual carriageway with two pedestrian subways. Traffic will turn on to a link road beneath the old Buckden railway bridges and the disused track converted into a carriageway passing under the A.1. 61 08 30a

1961 09 01

Mr C.A. Moulton, stationmaster at Longstanton for the past year, is leaving his post to go to Suffolk where he will combine the duties of two stationmasters at Halesworth and Bampton. His railway service began in 1936 as a weigh-lad at Grimsby Town goods yard and he has previously been stationmaster at Ancaster, Moulton and Wisbech St Mary. 61 09 01

1961 09 08

Joseph Farrington has worked for the Gas Board since 1917. He operates a Super Sentinel Loco, called 'Lucy', at the Coldham's Lane depot. Every morning he gets it going on a diet of wood and coke, eases her out of her shed and down to the six trucks with which they move supplies of coal from the main railway line, depositing it in a tipper. The operation is repeated until 400 tons have been shifted. The coal is then taken up into a hopper and unloaded into a lorry which transports it to the gasworks on Newmarket Road. 61 09 08c

1961 09 23

A Land Rover and a passenger train crashed at Swavesey level crossing. The crossing is controlled by two five-bar gates which are kept padlocked until traffic wants to go through. The vehicle was returning from milking with a full load of churns in the back when the diesel engine loomed out of the early-morning mist. Passengers were taken to Cambridge by bus and trains were back running by 10 a.m. 61 09 23a

1961 10 04

Swavesey rail crash details – 61 10 04

1961 10 04

Austin Beales and Coote and Warren opened their new fuel oil terminal and solid fuel depot in Clarendon Road, the most modern in Europe. Oil arrives from Mobil's refinery chiefly by rail and is discharged into three main storage tanks before being sent by road tanker over a wide area. Solid fuel deliveries are concentrated in Cambridge itself. Each year 45,000 tons is unloaded from rail wagons by two cranes with 65 wagons of solid fuel arriving each week. 61 10 04b & c

1961 11 02

Chesterton Railway Bridge with approaching train – photo 61 11 02

1961 11 03

Thirty years ago two L.N.E.R. railway carriages were brought from London on the line to Bartlow and transported to Balsham on a large trailer. Once on the site they were positioned parallel to each other leaving a 10ft gap in between. The roof was stretched right across and the gap enclosed with the front and back doors at either end. Down the centre of the house there is a lounge and kitchen with a double chimney stack in the middle, heating both rooms. Because the carriages are so solid the house is warm. It has no electricity and the family use paraffin for lighting and to run a refrigerator. The owner, Mr H.G. Garratt, would not change his unusual home, saying he loves everything about it. 61 11 03a

1961 11 15

Mildenhall Railway line inspected – BR want to close it – 61 11 15b

1961 11 20

Main train lines were diverted while railway engineers worked throughout the night to construct a bridge on the line between Great Chesterford and Shelford. They started at 11.30 pm under electric lighting, take up the old bridge and fit one of a standard design four feet above the water level of the narrow river at Duxford. Men worked in shifts throughout the day while trains were diverted via Audley End, Bartlow and Shelford. 61 11 20

1961 12 20

The railway line between Cambridge and Mildenhall opened on Whit Monday 1884 with the Fordham to Mildenhall extension nine months later. The branch line was probably never self-supporting and today there are two trains daily. All the villages between Barnwell and Fordham are well served by buses and it is only Mildenhall and Isleham that do not have a satisfactory alternative service. All existing parcel facilities would remain except at Isleham and Quy stations which would be reduced to unstaffed sidings. Even at Quy staff would be provided during the heavy sugar beet season to assist farmers loading traffic, an Inquiry heard. 61 12 20a & b

1962 01 01

Many Cambridgeshire villages are without electricity as eight inches of snow dislocated traffic and communications. Engineers had difficulties getting to the trouble through road blocks, fallen telephone wires and diversions. Snow ploughs have been working on the roads throughout the night. Railways have been badly affected with a drift between Shepreth and Royston making only single line traffic possible. It was the coldest night in Cambridgeshire since February 1917 62 01 01

1962 01 16

Tommy, the railway shunt horse from Newmarket has died, literally in harness. He was pulling a loaded grain wagon under the watchful eye of his shunter when, without previous warning, he collapsed and fell to the ground. Within seconds it was all over. The 10-year old handsome grey gelding of 17 hands was chosen to take part in the Horse of the Year Show because of his personality. A scrounger for tit-bits and a swank, he seemed instinctively to know how to get his way with human beings. Although he would jib at pulling more than two horse boxes at a time, Tommy was never work-shy and was a first class shunt horse. 62 01 16a

1962 01 30

W.H. Smith's bookstall on Newmarket railway station was completely destroyed by fire. It was first noticed at 11pm but there was no one at the station at that time and when firemen arrived the stall was well alight. Flames spread along the wooden awning above the platform, several doors were scorched by the heat and windows were broken. Two cycles used for newspaper deliveries were also severely damaged. 62 01 30

1962 03 13

An express freight train broke in two as it was passing through Audley End station. The two halves travelled about four miles downhill towards Cambridge and collided on the Ickleton road crossing and bridge outside Gt Chesterford station. A tanker wagon carrying 4,000 gallons of diesel oil was severely damaged causing the oil to spray out over the adjoining fields and seep into a stream. 62 03 13 & a & b

1962 04 01

Police are searching for a silver-grey American car which smashed down level crossing gates in Milton Road. Crossing keeper, Edward Dyson, had just closed the gates ready for the train when a large American car coming from the Milton direction rammed them. It reversed and headed back the way it had come. Members of the Cambridge City Reserves football team returning from their evening match at King's Lynn left their coach and helped drag parts of the broken gates from the rails. Mr Dyson telephoned Chesterton Junction and had a goods train diverted through Ely. 62 04 01a

1962 06 08

Cambridge railway station will become the "Gateway to East Anglia" when a new high speed passenger service to Oxford is introduced. At present there is only one through train a day between the two University cities but now a further seven will speed the service, some taking only two hours for the journey. From Cambridge there is easy access to Norwich and resorts such as Hunstanton, Lowestoft and Yarmouth. 62 06 08b

1962 06 18

Two local men were on the footplate of a B.1 class locomotive when it steamed out of Cambridge Railway Station to close an 80 years' period of railway history. Driver Bertram George and fireman Ivor Wilson were in charge of the 100-ton engine as it left the goods sidings with one carriage and a truck. It was the last train to leave Cambridge hauled by a steam engine. During the weekend a dozen other steam locomotives were driven or pulled to engine sheds in London as railwaymen finally severed their connections with the 'steamers'. Now all trains are being hauled by the new high-speed diesel locomotives 62 06 18

1962 06 23

Two village railway stations may be closed by British Railways. Only five people a day use Black Bank station on the main March line; the buildings are gradually subsiding into the fenland soil leaving the former stationmaster's house in a poor condition. And only eight people a day use the 11 stopping trains at Harston station; by closing it they could save nearly £700 a year. 62 06 23

1962 07 05

A leather bag containing 22 sticks of gelignite has been found in a wagon of coal delivered to Newmarket Railway Station. The locked wagon had been taken to the Co-operative Coal Depot in All Saints Road where the bag was discovered. Staff thought it contained tools but on opening they discovered sticks of gelignite wrapped in grease-proof paper. These looked very damp and dangerous so police were called. There was no question of the explosive being delivered with anybody's coal. The bag is thought to have belonged to a shot-firer who worked at the coal mine. 62 07 05

1962 08 21

Trains were cancelled after a derailment blocked the main line at Sawston – only a mile from the scene of a similar accident six months ago. The Dagenham to Whitemoor (March) goods train broke in two on a slight incline. The break-away section of the train caught up with the rear of the front part bouncing a 5,000 gallon tanker filled with paraffin a hundred yards along the track. The tanker ended up standing on end with paraffin splashing on the line. Firemen stood by with foam sprayers as engineers cleared it using a giant crane 62 08 21

1962 08 20

Railway station on listed buildings list – 62 08 20a

1962 09 08

A guard was taken to hospital with multiple injuries after a collision between two express freight trains near Huntingdon. Fifty wagons and a steam engine were derailed when one train ran into the rear of another that had been stopped by signals at Offord. One engine toppled on to its side. Railway gangs worked through the night but fifteen hours later the line was still blocked. The men were provided with food from a restaurant car brought from Grantham 62 09 08

1962 09 27

Thieves broke into a booking office at Newmarket Railway Station during the night and used gelignite to blow open a safe. "It must have been a very disappointing night's work for them, because they only got about £20" said Mr C.E. Tolliday, the station-master. Iron bars being used by bricklayers carrying out repairs to the Wood Ditton Road railway bridge were used to force the doors. The robbery was discovered shortly after 6.30 am by Mr Reg Cummins, a porter. The last train to pass through the station last night was the 9.16 from Cambridge and the safe had been locked at 9.45pm. 62 09 27

1962 10 25

Buckden's bypass has opened two months ahead of schedule. Traffic is running smoothly along the new road which eliminates the bottleneck in the village. The scheme includes a length of abandoned railway line carrying Huntingdon traffic underneath the Great North Road and pedestrian subways have also been provided. Nearly all the A1 in Huntingdonshire is now dual carriageway 62 10 25e

1962 12 07

Two railway lines in Cambridgeshire are under threat following Dr Beeching's proposals. All lines transporting less than 10,000 people and 10,000 tons of freight a week may close. This includes the line from Cambridge through Histon and Oakington and the one to Mildenhall through Burwell. Fruit growers would be seriously affected and have to switch to road transport, putting up prices. Rural bus services are another failure of Government policy and had been cut because they were unprofitable, a Labour meeting was told 62 12 07c

1963 01 15

The Flying Scotsman passed through Huntingdon station at above 75 mph on its last historic run from London to Leeds. The locomotive, which was sold recently to a Nottingham businessman for £4,000, was five minutes late. But train-spotters did not seem to mind as they jockeyed for positions with their camera and stop watches. A trace of billowing white steam roared through the station pushing everything, including the spotters standing on the edge of the platform, to one side. In a lightning green flash it had gone, well on its way to its first stop at Peterborough. 63 01 15a

1963 01 30

The delivery period for coal in Cambridge is still about a fortnight even though snow has released many frozen supplies. But reports of 'coal racketeering' are unfair, according to Austin Beales, one of the largest coal distributors. Certain small merchants have been in great difficulties during the past few weeks as the freeze-up of stocks at the pit-heads had brought immeasurable problems to the industry. People must wait until the National Coal Board in co-operation with the railways, regain their normal smooth functioning. 63 01 30

1963 03 15

The battle of the fens is on with councils in direct competition with each other in efforts to attract more light industry and halt the migration of their populations. Chatteris has a good labour force but every day 200 women leave to work in factories around Cambridge. March has a large railway marshalling yard employing 1,500 people and wants industry in case it is reduced in size. Ramsey are trying to get firms from Middlesex, bringing 500 employees into the town. It has little to attract them but hope that 'bingo and the cinemas' will be enough amusement until it can grow. 63 03 15

1963 03 27

The Beeching report on the future of British Railways suggests the closing down of 19 stations in the Cambridge area – including three serving the main towns of Haverhill, Saffron Walden and St Ives. There would be the complete withdrawal of passenger services from branch lines, Cambridge-March, Gt Shelford-Marks Tey, Audley End & Bartlow lines. Amongst the village stations closed to passenger traffic would be Histon, Wimblington and Chatteris, Bartlow, Pampisford and Linton together with Soham and Fordham. Services from Black Bank would also cease 63 03 27 & a

1963 04 02

The withdrawal of passenger train services from St Ives would be a great blow to trade; people in villages would not use buses with that tedious journey, the town's Chamber of Commerce heard. The line from March to Cambridge would remain open for freight and a rail conductor service for passengers might be provided. But it would deter industrialists who were considering setting up business. More light industries should be encouraged; they would supply the population to fill houses and the factories would contribute towards the rates and help meet the high cost of the new sewerage system. 63 04 02a

1963 04 04

The shock of Dr Beeching's plans to close Chatteris railway station and the St Ives loop-line connecting them with Cambridge and March is over. But Chatteris councillors' battle to maintain the line is hotting-up. It would hit many residents who travel to work in Cambridge each day or visit Addenbrooke's Hospital. If the station closes there would be more traffic on the roads which are already congested and make the town isolated, they claim. 63 04 04

1963 04

The withdrawal of passenger train services from St Ives would be a great blow to trade; people in villages would not use buses with that tedious journey, the town's Chamber of Commerce heard. The line from March to Cambridge would remain open for freight and a rail conductor service for passengers might be provided. But it would deter industrialists who were considering setting up business. More light industries should be encouraged; they would supply the population to fill houses and the factories would contribute towards the rates and help meet the high cost of the new sewerage system.

1963 04 06

Saffron Walden council decided to surrender without a fight to Dr Beeching's proposal to axe the town's branch railway line. It was part of a much bigger plan. They were not a museum committee and should consider an alternative transport system. But some councillors felt the line could be run at a tenth of its present cost and its closure would mean more bus services increasing the use of the roads and leading to expensive highway improvements. Many people travelled to London or Cambridge for work and many of the trains which currently stop at Audley End would not stop if the branch line closed. If people did not fight for this, they would not fight for anything. 63 04 06

1963 04 10

Flying Scotsman arrives at Cambridge station en route to London where it will pull an enthusiasts' train 63 04 10

1963 04 13

Parcels which arrived at Cambridge railway station in a tremendous rush just before Easter have caused a bigger backlog on deliveries than they did at Christmas. The parcels, mainly for local shops changing and increasing their stock for the beginning of the University term, are lining the platforms in barrow loads. "We just can't cope with them. We hope people expecting parcels will come to the station and collect them themselves if they're in a hurry. It will be the end of next week before we clear them", a railway spokesman said. 63 04 13

1963 04 17

Saffron Walden council were wrong to accept the proposed closure of the rail link to Audley End without protest and were letting residents down, Haverhill councillors felt. They claimed the withdrawal of passenger services from the Shelford-Haverhill-Marks Tey line and the Bartlow-Audley End link would disrupt the social and economic organisation of the area and damage their expansion scheme. Haverhill station should be kept open for freight traffic and personnel and luggage from Stradishall RAF station. It should also become a centre for the distribution of coal. 63 04 17a

1963 04 25

The Beeching report says the Cambridge main line would be retained but the branch lines that feed it are going to be withdrawn, meaning the business will fall off and putting it in future jeopardy. Three miles away a bridge was being built over a railway line where passenger services may be withdrawn and nobody knows how long it was going to be used for freight. Yet at the same time funding for the road bridge over the Cam at Walnut Tree Avenue was deferred time after time, councillors complained. 63 04 25b

1963 05 21

Barrington cement works fire of 100 tarred railway sleepers being used for extensions railway line – 63 05 21

1963 06 07

Royston Railway Bridge is being reconstructed to provide a wider road and footpaths with vastly improved visibility and more head clearance for rail traffic 63 06 07

1963 07 01

Histon primary school being demolished for Railway Bridge – 63 07 01

1963 07 05

The G.P.O.'s experiment to improve the parcel post service started with five new lorries operating from the parcels centre in Rosemary Lane. The present system is slow and costly. The new method will operate partly by rail and partly by road with parcels moved in bulk consignment. They hope it will reduce costs, speed the service and improve reliability. 63 07 05

1963 07 05

Margaret Reid, railway crossing keeper, Hinxton 63 07 05e

1963 07 31

Railway workers ran along the main lines just outside Cambridge Railway Station to warn the driver of an oncoming passenger train when a 100-ton diesel locomotive was derailed and fell across the tracks near the end of the platforms. Two platforms were put out of action because of blocked lines and the points mechanism was damaged. Repair gangs using a heavy mobile steam crane worked through the night to get the engine back on the track but the incident caused heavy delays to passenger traffic. Two other derailments occurred within 48 hours 63 07 31b, 63 08 01

1963 08 09

Gerald Forbes Tweedie, the Cambridge travel enthusiast, became the first man to have 'spotted' every steam or electric engine on use on Britain's railways during the last 24 years. Now the 41-year-old printing machine minder hopes to record his 1,000th night spent in a Youth Hostels Association building. As he travels through the country lanes seeking fresh railway lines to explore and new YHA hostels in which to stay, he makes a note of every new inn and public house sign he sees. So far he has collected 3,000 names of pubs and breweries. 63 08 09

1963 08 10

Fen Drayton residents are concerned about plans to dig for gravel on 300 acres of land north of the village. Dust thrown up by lorries thundering through the streets would discolour washing hanging on lines, they fear. But the firm say gravel is badly needed by London firms and was in very short supply. They would construct a special railway line from the pits to the main railway track, would fill in the pits after they'd been worked out and even plant trees around them. 63 08 10b

1963 08 26

Under the Beeching plan passenger services on the Stour Valley railway line will cease though the line will remain open for freight. Now the removal of goods yard sidings has been described as 'the normal recovery of redundant assets'. Those at Haverhill are being taken away because the light industry which had moved there under the 'overspill' scheme did not call for the use of heavy transport. Should this change it would be possible to install new sidings. The scrap value of the steel in the rails more than offsets the labour costs of removing them. 63 08 26

1963 10 11

Ely Beet Sugar Factory has started its 29th campaign. By the time it ends, four months from now, nearly half-a-million tons of sugar beet will have been processed into raw sugar which is sent in bulk transporters to refining factories. It draws its supplies from more than 2,400 farms with 300 men working shifts around the clock. Ninety per cent of the beet comes by road, the rest by rail. For a number of years some came by river but this was discontinued three years ago. 63 10 11, a b

1963 11 07

After declaring the new Histon railway bridge open Queen Elizabeth the Queen Mother cut a tape with a pair of gold-handled scissors then decided to walk to the crest of the which was lined by schoolchildren. She then moved on to Melbourn old peoples home where she met Amelia Dye, the oldest resident and was presented with quince jelly. But it was a frustrating day for news agency photographer Peter Dunn: the Queen Mother then admired his baby, cradled in his wife's arms – but there were no cameraman to get a picture – 63 11 07b 63 11 07a, 63 11 08

1963 12 06

British Railways announced plans to close the Oxford to Cambridge line through Bletchley and Bedford, despite proposals in the Beeching Report for modified passenger services. A financial appraisal shows the line is losing money. MP Francis Pym says he has been approached by constituents in Gamlingay and Longstowe and will take every step to make local views known to the

Minister of Transport. There will be a detailed examination and consultations before closure takes effect. 63 12 06

1963 12 06

Drinkers at the Black Horse pub in Fowlmere enjoy meeting 'Cleo', landlord Alfred Thatcher's rather unusual pet. It is a two-foot long Cayman alligator which lives in a warm aquarium in one of the private rooms. When the family moved to Fowlmere she was brought down by train to Cambridge travelling in a cardboard box and began to honk loudly. Passengers were concerned when told it was an alligator making the queer noises. 63 12 06d

1964 01 11

The Oxford to Cambridge railway line links the two important university cities and should remain open, a Reinvigoration Society says. It bisects the line from King's Cross to Peterborough at Sandy where the two sets of platforms are adjacent. But no attempt has been made to encourage interchange of passengers. Through trains could be run from Norwich to Bristol in five hours using inter-city diesel units with miniature buffet facilities. But the route is divided between three of British Railway's regions and an overlord – line manager should be appointed to co-ordinate services 64 01 11b

1964 01 30

Once a day, at 1.15 pm, a little diesel train leaves Ely station, goes eight miles and arrives at Sutton. Then at 3.20 pm it turns round and goes back again. Hauling three goods wagons, it stops first at Little Thetford where the driver and fireman nip down smartly from the cab, open and close the gates, and continue the trip. It carries mainly fuel, with possible stops at Stretham, Wilburton and Haddenham stations. Thirty years this little-known line carried a passenger service. It was constructed under the Grunty Fen Railway Act of 1864 and the Friends of Haddenham hope to run a centenary passenger special. 64 01 30b

1964 02 03

A railway porter and his family have lived at the 120-year-old Newmarket railway goods station for seven years. Their 10-roomed Victorian 'mansion' has a frontage of over 100ft and along its length are nine pairs of magnificent columns. It stands in its own grounds and costs £1.1s.4d. a week to rent. Inside offices have been converted into three bedrooms, a lounge, living room and kitchen. There is also a large cellar. But he would prefer to live in a small, comfortable, three-bedroomed house. "We are very lonely and have problems getting baby sitters because they think the place is haunted", he says. 64 02 03

1964 02 17

Cambridge to Oxford railway line too important to be lost – feature – 64 02 17b

1964 03 05

Royston new railway bridge nears completion – 64 03 05a

1964 06 06

Newmarket's 120-year-old goods station with its grandiose façade of nine pairs of stone columns is still in everyday use. Caravans and machinery account for most of the traffic. Standing in its own grounds with a frontage of over 100 feet it gives the impression of a country mansion. Until recently it was home to a railway porter but they have moved to a more modern house and now the rooms are draped in dust sheets, unused. Newmarket councillors call it a 'monstrosity' and want it to be used for industrial development. But now it has been listed as a building of special architectural interest 64 06 06c

1964 06 11

Royston railways in Victorian times recalled – 64 06 11

1964 06 22

Automatic half-barrier railway level crossings to be installed Wisbech Road Manea and Bottisham Rd Waterbeach – 64 06 22

1964 06 26

Bottisham Lode railway station, once used by dairy farmers as a centre for milk distribution, is to close under the Beeching plan. The old waiting rooms, station master's office and lamp room will be turned into office accommodation. James Beard, who has worked as porter for 45 years, members when there was also a station master, three clerks, two signalmen and an assistant porter. Now only he remains. The once gleaming rails are becoming rusty and the British Railways sign creaks on ancient hinges. Three times a week freight trains pass through but these will stop on July 13th – 64 06 26

1964 07 06

Proposals for a new town for more than 100,000 people at Lakenheath, instead of Stansted were backed. It would very desirable to have some sort of growth in the area which at the moment is very sparsely populated and should suit industry. Planners say an airport at Stansted would take good agricultural land and travel developments such as helicopters and monorails would bring Lakenheath within an hour of the capital. It has the longest runway for planes in the country and could be developed as London's third airport. But there are no plans at present for closing the American base and a new hospital and other facilities have recently been built. 64 07 06

1964 07 07

First automatic railway crossing gates being tested at Manea – 64 07 07

1964 07 11

With a shuddering roar, a diesel locomotive disturbed the sleepy silence of Mildenhall railway station and with four empty wagons trundled away on the last trip to Cambridge. The station's freight line, which opened in 1885, had fallen under the Beeching axe. The stationmaster, Mr N.S. Sykes, stood on the platform among weeds and wild flowers and waved as the train pulled out. Passenger services were withdrawn in 1961 and freight limited to coal, cattle seed and worn tyres which were sent to Harwich for export. 64 07 11

1964 07 16

If Oxford to Cambridge passenger rail services are withdrawn alternative road services will add congestion – 64 07 16

1964 09 03

Passenger services on the Ely to Newmarket line are to be withdrawn on January 4th and Soham and Fordham stations will be closed. Alternative bus services will be provided, though the stationmaster says that the present system is quite adequate to cope with the two or three passengers who use the stations. The line is uneconomic: six trains stop a day during summer but none run at time when a heavy load of passengers could be expected. The staff of 12 at each station will be retained to deal with freight traffic such as scrap iron from Middlesbrough and flowers from local nurseries 64 09 03b

1964 09 04

A journey on the fated Ely-Newmarket railway line shows why it has become the victim of Beeching's axe. The only regular traveller is a British Railway employee who uses it to get home to Fordham. Two people got on at Ely – both BR staff – and the only other passengers were an American couple touring Britain. There was nobody waiting at Soham or Fordham. Sometimes up to 30 people get on the Ely-bound station at Soham before changing trains to Cambridge but mostly only a few people use it. 64 09 04

1964 09 05

Cambridge Railway station to build park for 200 cars, coal tower to be demolished; Histon station prepare for garden competition – 64 09 05

1964 09 07

Crowds lined the platform as the Beeching axe fell on Saffron Walden. About 130 people packed the rail bus on the final trip to Audley End. They included the chairman of the Railway Group which had led the fight to keep it open. The guard, Ron Cornwell who has worked on the railway since 1946, commented “If a few more of these had travelled earlier on, perhaps it would not have been closed.” At Haverhill two local railwaymen were the only people on the platform when the diesel railbus, crowded with passengers made the last journey on the branch line between Bartlow and Audley End. It will be replaced by buses. 64 09 07

1964 10 02

Coote and Warren, the coal merchants, have used Somersham as a coal depot ever since the station opened in 1850. But they have still not been informed by British Railways that it is to be closed on December 28th. Few other businesses will be affected. Norman’s, the general stores, say supplies went to Chatteris by rail before coming in by road and fruit growers mostly have their own lorries. Stationmaster George Hlubek does not know where he will be transferred whilst Bert Rivers, who is now three years over retirement age, will stay on as a passenger porter 64 10 02

1964 12 11

There were originally three windmills owned by the Nunn family but as they were superseded the buildings fell into disuse. Two were pulled down and the other, at Kneesworth, was converted into living quarters for the servants who worked for Dr Edmond Nunn. After removing the top portion, which carried the huge sails, he had it rebuilt in the style of the ancient John o’ Gaunt’s tower which stood down the Old Fen. Unfortunately vandals have completely ransacked it of its fittings. But Mrs George Oliver can clearly remember it and the small railway which ran down the Drift on which little trucks full of the milled flower were manhandled as far as the main road - 64 12 11a

1964 12 18

Freight train derailed at Sandy – all main railway trains diverted – 64 12 18 & a

1965 02 10

Newmarket railway station facelift – 65 02 10d

1965 04 08

Railway crash Gt Chesterford – 65 04 08d

1965 04 15

Barnwell railway station children of children of D.B. Thornhill – photo – 65 04 15a

1965 04 22

Charlie is last railway horse at Newmarket – 65 04 22e

1965 04 23

Shelford fight closure of Shelford-Marks Tey railway line – 65 04 23a

1965 08 18

Milton Road railway gates hit by lorry – 65 08 18a

1965 09 10

Cambridge railway station– photo feature – 65 09 10b, 10c

1965 09 13

Last passenger train from Ely to Newmarket – feature & photo – 65 09 13a, b

1965 09 14

Railway signalman Cambridge South Box H. Andrews reflects on 45 years' service – 65 09 14a

1965 09 15

Minister rejects protest over closure Cambridge to Oxford railway line – 65 09 15a # c.26.2

1965 10 12

Mildenhall railway station derelict – photo – 65 10 12g

1965 10 25

Railway not hopeful about bridge from Davy Road to link large housing estates at Cherry Hinton – 65 10 25a

1966 01 18

Upper freight yard depot of British Railways to close on January 31st and part of the land may be used in a new road scheme connecting Brooklands Avenue and Newmarket Road. The public depot on the other side of the main line to remain open 66 01 18c

1966 04 01

Rail services between Cambridge and Oxford to continue as no adequate alternative bus service – 66 04 01c

1966 04 09

Ely-Haddenham-Sutton railway – history – 66 04 09a

1966 04 15

Prime Minister rejects plea to save Oxford railway line – 66 04 15a

1966 04 29

Railway stations to be sold at Six Mile Bottom, Sutton (pic), Bluntisham, Haddenham, Harston, Wilburton, Stretham, Dullingham, Isleham, Longstanton – 66 04 29a

1967 06 05

Railway carriage home at Barnwell station retains many Pullman features – 67 06 05

1967 11 21

Railway bridge on Cambridge to Bedford Line between Toft and Bassingbourn in poor condition – 67 11 21

1968 12 10

Lords Bridge railway station to be observatory – photo – 68 12 10

1969 01 24

Cambridge-St Ives railway line could be kept running – feature – 69 01 24 23

1969 03 20

Dunsmore Close, modern development astride old Cambridge- Mildenhall railway line – photo – 69 03 20

1969 06 19

Gelignite used to blast away one of four brick piers which carried the old Cambridge to Bedford railway line over the Cam at Trumpington – 69 06 19

1969 11 18

Railwaymen deliver newspapers overnight – feature – 69 11 18a & b

1970 08 26

Railway track removed at Gt Shelford junction – 70 08 26

1970 10 05

Cambridge to St Ives railway line final journey – 70 10 05

1971 02 16

Railway station façade facelift – 71 02 16

1971 08 05

Cambridge to Fen Ditton road closed for removal Railway Bridge on old Mildenhall line – 71 08 05

1971 08 05

Railway station new travel centre and entrance hall opened – 71 08 24

1972 03 11

The former Ministry of Housing and Local Government simultaneously agreed to the building of one of the world's biggest radio telescopes near Cambridge and the routing of a major road straight through it, the inquiry (into the Western bypass) heard yesterday. Professor Sir Martin Ryle said in 1966 an application for a grant to build a 5 km radio telescope along the line of the old Bletchley to Cambridge railway at Lord's Bridge and extend it as far as the bridge over the River Cam was being discussed. A grant of more than £2 million was made for the telescope. Later it was learned that discussions had led to a route for the Cambridge Western bypass which passed through the line of telescopes. As a result the size of the telescope had to be reduced to 4.6 km with a considerable loss of power and the instrument was site half-a-mile further west. In 1970 it was announced that the bypass was to be built as a motorway. Then it became known that radar devices were being developed for long-distance vehicles to prevent multiple motorway crashes. It seems likely that some of these devices will be introduced during the next five years.

1972 08 05

The long-awaited Cambridge Transportation Study was finally published yesterday. It is two years overdue and has cost £113,000 - almost £1,000 a page. It was jointly commissioned in 1967 by the Cambridge city and County Councils and the University. It was to be carried out by R. Travers Morgan and Partners and was estimated at that time to cost £78,000. Its major proposals include a Railway Road leaving the A10 south of the Trumpington street traffic lights, hugging the northbound railway track all the way to Newmarket Road. After crossing the Cam the new road would veer sharply west to follow the St Ives railway line along to the A10 Milton Road before linking up with Arbury Road. The Railway Road should be largely dual two-lane carriageway. Full construction could take many years

1972 11 10

It's five years since the carriage doors slammed at Longstowe station. Now it is one of four stations on the old Cambridge to Bedford line which will go under the hammer at an auction in Bedford next month. They were all closed by Dr Beeching. Longstowe is a rare opportunity for the railway enthusiast with the money to back up his fanaticism. It has a vacant station house and the station building to go with it. The track and sleepers have already been taken up and the lines sold to adjoining landowners

1972 12 16

The last five plots of the old Cambridge to Bedford railway were sold yesterday for a total of £137,250. The line was once the link between Cambridge and Bedford but those days went when Beeching axed the route. Since then British Rail have taken up the rails, and sold the land on which they stood to neighbouring farmers. Yesterday four of the stations and their accompanying yards came under the auctioneers hammer. The last plot was the Old North Road station at Longstowe. The buyer

who paid £23,000 for it said he had no idea what would be done with the 1.25 acres site and the station house, booking office, waiting rooms and goods shed

1973 02 14

The Government have abandoned the Hovertrain project. They decided two weeks ago not to plough more money into the project, but the decision was kept secret because the Aerospace Minister, Mr Michael Heseltine, hopes to sell off parts of the project to two contractors. Mr Heseltine said nearly all the 150 workers on the project would lose their jobs. An arrangement has been made with Hawker Siddeley to develop the linear motor. British Rail had agreed to continue development of the magnetic suspension system. The Tracked Hovercraft Company was set up in 1967 and £5,250,000 was originally earmarked for the project

1973 04 27

The railway children will be laughing and chattering again soon in the waiting room and ticket office of the ghost station at Haddenham - although it is years since the train passed along the line. The little station will come to life again as a result of the vision and far-sightedness of Mrs Jean Holdaway, the Girl Guides County Commissioner, who saw that the crumbling building had the possibility for being turned into a splendid outdoor activities centre for Guides. The old waiting room will become the living-cum-dining-room for the parties of Brownies, Guides and Rangers who will use the centre. The first Brownies will arrive to stay at Haddenham Halt just as Mrs Holdaway retires as County Commissioner after five years in the job

1973 07 11

The possible reopening of the St Ives - Cambridge passenger rail service is a very real priority, said Mr Robert Gemell, the Chief Passenger Manager of British Rail. He gave an assurance that he was doing all he could to get the line reopened. But the future was really in the hands of local councils and the people living in the area to make their demands for this service heard in the right places, he said. The final decision was with the Government on the advice of British Rail. The recent estimated cost of re-opening the service was £100,000 but British Rail were trying to see if this could be reduced

1974 01 30

Meldreth has nearly doubled its population during the past 10 years from less than 900 in 1962 to about 1900. About one third of the population increase could be attributed to the Manor School run by the Spastics Society. It is now the major source of employment in the village although the biggest employers are the Atlas Stone Co. Ltd. just outside the village. Planners say the electrification of the Royston - Kings Cross railway line will undoubtedly create development pressures.

1974 05 24

British rail passenger fares will go up by an average of 12% from June. Cambridge commuters to London will pay £1.79 instead of £1.60 for a second-class day return, while the ordinary return fare goes up from £2.55 to £2.87. Other increases affecting local travellers are: Huntingdon-London day return up to £1.79; Ely to London day return now £2.36 while a second-class single from Cambridge to Ipswich goes up 10p to 85p

1974 12 31

The Earith site of the Tracked Hovercraft trials is up for sale. The main "hangar" area of 6,300 square feet of industrial floor space is on offer. The prototype train ran at 107 mph before being scrapped in February last year because the Government would not put in the £4 million necessary to finance the second stage of the project which had, at that time, cost £5 m. The Government gave the go-ahead last August for the dismantling of the three-mile test track. The technology is now being pursued in Japan, Western Germany, France & Canada

1975 04 15

Eight old houses near the railway line, at Mill Road, Cambridge, are being offered by the city council, which owns them, to dossers and down-and-outs. The houses are scheduled for eventual demolition to allow British Rail to widen the bridge when it starts work on electrifying the main Cambridge-London line. But because no date has been set the council has offered them on an annual basis to Cambridge Night Shelter. The council considers the houses which stand on the Argyle Street corner to be suitable because there are no other occupied houses immediately adjacent.

1975 07 23

Cambridge city council has accepted an invitation from the County Council to build an £8,500 bus-rail interchange improvement outside Cambridge railway station. The scheme includes bus waiting bays and shelters.

1975 08 06

British Rail decided to blow up a redundant pumping station by the railway line near Teversham. But the building was more solid than expected: seven pounds of explosive was not enough. The pumping station, which stood over a 75 foot well, used to supply all the water for the steam engines in the Cambridge area. The site will now be bulldozed and earthed over.

1975 08 26

A visit to the lavatory by a railwayman has been caught up in a web of red tape. Mr Clarence Page who mans the signal box West River Crossing, Lt Thetford, wanted a proper flush lavatory, after getting through three of the chemical type in the last seven years. He got permission and a plumber came down and fitted it at a cost of £25. However when the bill reached British Rail headquarters they were not pleased. The flush lavatory was ripped out and another chemical one put in. He reckons the exercise has cost as much as £200. The Union representative says: "We want a flush lavatory. We want to be classified as human beings"

1975 12 13

Commuters may grumble non-stop about trains being late, but few could work up enough steam to sustain a systematic six-month daily time check on arrival times. But Saffron Walden commuter, Mr Roy Mager, has been checking the 7.30 daily run from Audley End to Liverpool Street and claims that 92 per cent of the time the train arrived in London late – overdue on average by 6½ minutes. But, to be fair, twice it was a minute early.

1975 12 19

A plea was made for British Rail to open a station at Cherry Hinton. The existing traffic problems would get even worse when more than 4,000 extra people went to the village with the new council development. Passenger trains could easily stop there. The idea had already been suggested informally by British Rail and was under consideration. Coun Taylor said a mother with children could pay £1 just to get to Cambridge and back by bus. Coun Rowley thought his was evidence of how the bus service had failed

1975 12 31

Living on a modern house on a St Ives estate just did not have enough character for Mr Peter Cracknell and his wife. So they have taken on the mammoth challenge of bring back to life a railway station at Bluntisham. Accommodation is not exactly tailor-made for a family at the moment. There is a booking hall, waiting room, a kitchen in a shed, a ticket office, three bedrooms, a yard and outbuildings. 'There aren't many houses with a platform at the bottom of the garden with a railway line as well. Most of our friends think we are crazy', he said.

1976 01 31

The old signal box on the Cambridge to St Ives railway line at Oakington was loaded on to a lorry and taken to the Bressingham Steam Museum near Diss. The box, one of the few remaining Great Eastern types dating back to the early 1900s, was bought several years ago by railway enthusiast Mr Mike

Sharman, who lives at Foxton. However he ran into snags when he wanted to move the box to his home so he presented it to the museum.

1976 04 02

A plan for building a £13,000 halt at Cherry Hinton on the main Cambridge-Ipswich railway line was rejected by the county highways committee. Cambridge city council had asked for the halt, saying it would be useful for commuters and people working in the expanding office development in Station Road. Councillor Charles Swift (Peterborough) who is a train driver said that halts usually consisted of just a few old railway sleepers by the side of the track and not the station and buildings proposed for Cherry Hinton.

1976 04 15

Fenland villagers who bought cheap whisky buried it in their gardens and poured it down the drain as police began investigating the theft of more than 2,000 bottles from Whitemoor railway marshalling yard at March. Almost £8,000-worth of Haig and J & B Export whisky bound for the continent was stolen in three raids from vans at the yards. Some whisky was hidden a suitcase, some was transferred to lemonade and sherry bottles, and some of it was drunk.

1976 06 29

Railway workers spent almost seven hours repairing a section of the main King's Cross to Cambridge line at Shepreth which became distorted because of the heatwave. As temperatures hit 94 degrees in the centre of Cambridge one sour note came from King's College chapel where the organ was out of tune because of the weather.

1977 01 13

Heavy snow hit Cambridge as the worst weather for 14 years caused nationwide chaos and led to widescale disruption on the roads and railways. Weathermen say the snowfalls will be heavy and prolonged and warm winds could produce drifts. In many places there were snowfalls of more than one foot. Thousands of people were late for work as hard-packed snow, freezing fog and black ice made driving treacherous. And many trains were late or cancelled despite an all-night fight against the Arctic conditions by British Rail who called in their full cold weather emergency procedures.

1977 01 19

Reach mothers are uniting to press for the rebuilding of a bridge which they say is a potential death trap. It spans the disused railway line on the only main road into Reach from Swaffham Prior. Twenty feet below the bridge are the remains of the parapets, demolished by hooligans, brick by brick, over the last two years. A water main had burst on the surface of the bridge, which has subsided. The Assistant County Surveyor agreed the ideal solution would be to demolish the bridge and level the road, but they were unable to make funds available at the moment. The council is still in the process of taking the bridge over from the Railways Board.

1977 02 03

The villagers of Offord Darcy will shortly say goodbye to their most familiar landmark – a railway carriage which has stood at the entrance of the village for more than half a century. It is going to Kent to become part of a museum railway. Mrs Joan Athow has lived there since she was a child until just two years ago. Her grandfather bought the carriage when it was taken out of service in 1921. It was built in the 1890s and did the London to Scotland run which passes through Offord station, since closed down. Recently it began to deteriorate and they began to look around for someone to restore it. The operation will cost around £2,000.

1977 02 24

A train derailment has put a freight line from Cambridge to St Ives out of action. An engine pulling nine wagons left the rails at Fen Drayton. The train driver and guard escaped unhurt as the engine ground to a halt – leaning over only feet from a flooded field. One theory is that the recent flooding had loosened ballast under the rails, causing them to slip sideways. The line is used mainly to

transport sand and gravel from the Amey Roadstone Corporation works to London and will disrupt shipments of thousands of tons of sand and gravel

1977 03 01

Somersham villagers are pleased to announce the departure of their old railway station. The disused wooden buildings claimed to be a potential danger to children are to be knocked down. But this does not mean the end of the line for the century-old station. A mystery businessman is having it turned into a mammoth jigsaw puzzle – to be erected more than 100 miles away near a small private railway line in Berkshire. The parish council chairman said: “We hope whoever it is takes a liking to the signal box as well. That needs to go too and then there will be no danger at all.”

1977 07 28

The Railway Tavern, Shippea Hill, is threatened with closure by Watney Mann and the regulars are upset. The older men got to thinking back about the pub’s previous owners. It was Steward and Patterson’s, then Ely Ales, then East Anglian Breweries, then Watney’s, then it was Truemans and then Watney’s again. Three years ago it was one of the busiest pubs around. A lot of men worked in the station’s goods yards but they were closed down and the custom drifted away. Now customers include a few farm workers and the passing trade: sales reps and occasional tourists. Sometimes servicemen from Lakenheath or Mildenhall pop in.

1977 09 30

The Transport Minister is investigating claims that British Rail is planning to axe overnight trains between Ely and Norwich and King’s Lynn. There had been negotiations over the cuts in services between 10 pm and 6 am. At present there are three or four trains during this time and ASLEF fear any changes would be the thin end of the wedge in steps towards closure. But British Rail say that far from reducing services they are actually planning some marginal improvements.

1978 01 03

A tornado cut a two-mile swathe through Newmarket. Roofs were ripped off buildings, windows smashed and cars overturned. Every window in the railway station signal box was smashed. Chief Inspector Trevor Hewitt of Newmarket police said: “It’s a disaster area. It was just a freak storm and only lasted a couple of minutes. The damage is appalling. Roofs have caved in, windows have been smashed and cars overturned”. In Cambridge the wind lifted the roof from a house in King Street.

1978 01 05

The signal box at Newmarket railway station, which was badly damaged in the tornado, has been demolished. In half-an-hour a mechanical digger managed what the freak winds had failed to do – reduce the wooden building to a heap of torn timber. It was right in the path of the tornado which shifted it on its foundations and smashed most of the windows. After the early morning trains had passed through the station the digger set to work tearing the box apart. A temporary hut has been erected and the equipment needed to operate the points and signals installed. It will be used while British Rail decides on the provision of a new one.

1978 05 24

Barnwell station will not be reopened to deal with next season’s influx of soccer fans ... because British Rail does not own it. There has been growing support for the idea since Cambridge United won promotion to the Second Division, as a way of stopping fans who come by rail from wandering through the city. But the station has ceased to exist and the land is part of a private dwelling. Any new halt would be an expensive and complicated business. The station house, platform and access were sold off in the 1960s and now form the flourishing Kindrum Kennels.

1978 09 15

Fire swept through the old railway station buildings at Pampisford, gutting a warehouse storing timber and badly damaging an office block owned by a firm called Solo Park. Firemen used breathing apparatus to get into the building and traffic on the A11 was slowed down as hose reels stretched

across the road. "You could hear the windows cracking and then the roof crashed in", one eyewitness said. Fire also damaged a stage at Fulbourn Hospital where a grand piano and film screen was destroyed.

1978 10 10

The 600-ton Fenman express train, the fastest on the Cambridge run, smashed through the level crossing gates at Shelford. Luck meant that none of the hundreds of commuting motorists was on the spot and luck stopped the 11-coach train carrying about 400 passengers being derailed. Luck also saved crossing-keeper Fred Bond as the other gate wound itself round his line-side hut, splintering the woodwork, smashing every window – but leaving intact the horseshoe nailed above the door. It was the third time in nine years that a train had gone through the closed gates.

1978 10 11

British Rail seems rather attached to the traditional style level crossing gate. Each time one is smashed to pieces by a train at Great Shelford they replace it with a new one. The crossing is a traditional manned gate system – branded by a Government report in 1968 as a 'creaking anachronism'. Since then there have been level crossing accidents at Shelford in January 1969 and October 1971, Longstanton, Whittlesey, Prickwillow and Brinkley Road crossing near Newmarket. The sight of BR workmen installing yet another manned gate at Gt Shelford has done little to allay the public's fears of their safety.

1978 10 20

The level-crossing keeper at Great Chesterford described his day: "You learn the sleep through the trains, even though they rush right next door to the house and almost shake you out of bed. The gates are open to trains until 7 am, after that they're open to traffic. You don't often get woken up in the night – about once every two months a driver wants to get through; according to regulations you're allowed 20 minutes dressing time, but I don't bother. You have to put up with all sorts of things. People flushing the train loo over the crossing or impatient lorry drivers who use your garden as a lavatory if they're kept waiting. The other day the bell broke down and so I didn't open the gates. Next thing there was this darn great express sitting there, hooting at me"

1978 12 12

The largest crane in Britain was manoeuvred carefully into position as part of the massive construction work to a motorway bridge spanning the main London railway line at Stump Cross. British Rail closed the track and under the glare of arc lights massive 85-ton parapet beams were trundled by rail from Whittlesford station yard to the site and the operation began to lift them to the bridge above. The operation which started at 3.30 am was completed by noon and was watched by many observers who braved the cold to see the motorway engineers at work.

1978 12 15

The East Anglian Railway Development Society urges the restoration of passenger trains on the Cambridge to St Ives line. Large domestic and industrial developments have taken place along the route and the new housing on the Arbury Road Estate would make for increased usage at Histon and even warrant a new halt in the Kings Hedges area. A Parkway station should be built to serve the Sawston area and Meldreth become the boarding point for Kings Cross trains.

1979 01 23

The railway line between Swavesey and Cambridge will be used for a passenger service on March 31st for the first time since its closure in 1971. Trains will call at Longstanton, Oakington and Histon – at least for one day. A special train is being organised by the Railway Development Society in conjunction with British Rail. It will leave Swavesey at 1pm and arrive at Cambridge an hour later, returning at 5.30 pm. The fare for adults will be about £1, children 75p and cycles free.

1979 04 02

There isn't much left of Swavesey station. The station house and offices are all gone, leaving just a few broken seats and a creeper-covered shelter to accommodate the traveller. The railway line which goes through to St Ives was shut to passengers on 3rd October 1970. Now the only trains to use it carry freight and aggregates from Fen Drayton, and oranges to Chivers' factory at Histon. But on Saturday a 'special' was chartered from British Rail by the Cambridge Rail Action Group which wants to see passenger services restored. Every single ticket was sold within five days and nobody complained when the train was a little late arriving and Swavesey Brownies were busy brewing up coffee for any day-trippers

1979 09 13

The Cambridge area may increasingly become a territory for commuters due to the combined effect of the M11 and railway electrification; estate agents say people should buy houses now, while they can afford them. Heydon is among the more sought-after villages but unfortunately opportunities to buy homes there are rare. One of the few is a four-bedroomed detached house situated in large grounds, including a shower room, carpets and kennels. It is priced at around £69,950

1979 09 17

There are three telephone operators on duty at Cambridge railway station; they can tell someone the train times between Madras and Bombay, but don't want to. Because Cambridge isn't on the main line most cross-country rail inquiries involve looking up train times and co-ordinating them on several different pages of the standard published timetables. So every year they compile their own timetables to take passengers to every station in the country. It takes two people a month's work but has proved so useful that travel agents are now buying copies from the station. They have also collected their own file of useful information such as how long it takes to walk from one Birmingham station to another.

1979 11 27

Cambridge Councillors want British Rail to spend £500,000 on building a footbridge over the railway lines from Rustat Road to the railway station, and also want a footpath from Devonshire Road to the entrance. It would assist many people who currently have to travel long distances and now BR is about to begin electrification they want a commitment to them. But British Rail is opposed to both plans claiming they would bring security problems as well as affecting future land development potential. The high cost is caused by the length of the bridge and the difficulties building it over the mass of rail lines.

1980 01 24

A shortage of water hampered firemen at Fulbourn when one of the biggest fires for many years caused about £100,000 damage to a garage workshop. The blaze left a trail of destruction including five cars that were little more than charred wrecks. It broke out in a converted Victorian railway goods store which once formed part of Fulbourn station. Only the shell survives now. Nearby was an industrial complex which included huge chemical and paint storage warehouses and a large agricultural engineering business. 80 01 24

1980 01 25

Ely station has again been chosen as the Motorail terminal for the whole of East Anglia. It will offer a Thursday and Saturday overnight service to Stirling. The service was switched from Cambridge and has been so successful there is now a doubt whether it will ever return. This season's fares will mean a car and family of four travelling by sleeper at peak times will pay £156.50 for return tickets. 80 01 26

1980 02 15

Ciba-Geigy is planning a new railway link to their site at Duxford which would mean 13,000 fewer lorries passing through local villages. At present the plastics factory is served by two sidings, one in Great Chesterford and the other at Whittlesford. Loading and unloading is carried out by a fleet of lorries including a tanker for highly inflammable methanol. Their journeys lead through narrow

winding streets. But if they obtain a rail freight facilities grant it would provide a spur line into the site; however they need permission for a railway crossing on the Hinxton road. Nearly everybody likes the idea. 80 02 15

1980 02 27

Senior dons at Girton are pursuing an astonishing plan to link their college with Cambridge by railway. They are proposing a mono-rail link which would run mainly at ground level on university and college-owned land to the Sidgwick Avenue arts site and University Library. The main difficulties are the high cost of the project, which would need to cross the Huntingdon and Madingley Roads and the delicate negotiations with other colleges. The college's undergraduates have to cycle two miles in all weathers to attend lectures and many have been injured in road accidents. But two recent changes may ensure it is never built: the opening of the Western By-pass has reduced the amount of traffic and there will soon be a cycle lane. 80 02 27

1980 03 13

More details have been released of the amazing project to run a mono-rail between Girton College and Cambridge. The Swiss system employs a steel rail carried on concrete pillars about 20 feet above the ground. Electrically-powered trains carrying 100 people in two 50-seater cars would run five journeys each way at rush hour at a speed of 30 mph. It would do the journey in five minutes. The train would not be obtrusive and would make less noise than a motorcar. The scheme would cost about £500,000 and need a private Act of Parliament. 80 03 13

1980 03 14

Railwayman Charlie Langford is going to have a comfortable retirement thanks to the passengers who pass through Shepreth station. For at a surprise presentation in the Plough pub he was given his favourite office chair as a gift from the commuters who use the line. "I will use it instead of my armchair, it's much more comfortable" he said. He was also given a painting of the station and a first-day cover with British Rail commemorative stamps. 80 03 14c

1980 03 24

Rail transport enthusiasts who want the Cambridge to St Ives branch line re-opened have hired a 10-coach Inter-City train. It will set off from Swavesey station and call at Longstanton, Oakington and Histon before running non-stop to Liverpool Street. The branch line closed to passengers in October 1970 but the track has been kept open by block freight trains carrying Spanish oranges and pulp to Cadburys at Histon and bringing out sand from Amey Roadstone. But the track has recently been lifted beyond Fen Drayton and the station site at St Ives has been obliterated by the new by-pass. 80 03 24

1980 04 19

Nearly £330,000 would have to be spent to save the old railway station at Newmarket. It was built in 1848 and described as 'the most sumptuously baroque station of the early Victorian decades' but it has been empty for 18 years and parts of it are in a dangerous condition. Now a Construction Company wants to demolish it and build 25 houses and 27 flats on the site. A number of amenity groups want the station to be saved but the owner says it would be better to demolish it and preserve part of the façade in a museum. 80 04 19c

1980 04 22

East Anglia's railway branch lines, untouched since the Beeching axe, face a cutback this summer because of rapidly increasing running costs, deteriorating track and rolling stock and a cut in Government grants. Although Cambridge-based services will not be the first to go, there are signs that they could be affected. It is known that British Rail has been studying a scheme to close a section of the Ely-Norwich line which serves Shippea Hill, Lakenheath and Brandon stations. 80 04 22b

1980 06 06

Girton College's imaginative plan to build a two-mile aerial roadway into Cambridge has been shelved. A driverless 100-seater train would have run 20 feet above ground taking students from the college to Grange Road. But they have had difficulty crossing land owned by other colleges and raising the money and there has been an improvement in traffic conditions since the opening of the Western by-pass 80 06 06a

1980 07 11

A steer escaped from Garnham's meat wholesalers of Coldham's Lane Cambridge while it was on its way to be slaughtered. It jumped from a loading bay and got on to the railway line where it was nearly hit by one train before galloping at full speed towards another. Then it spotted a group of heifers on Stourbridge Common and jumped a four-foot high fence to get into the field. It was finally shot dead by a marksman after being surrounded by squads of police. 80 07 11c

1980 07 26

Foxton it has tripled in size during the 25 years that Thomas Edis has been a parish councillor. He led the successful fight to save the railway station from Dr Beeching's axe and now many London commuters have helped swell the population to about 1,200 people. But his greatest achievement was the installation of street lighting in the mid-1950s – which had been under discussion since before the First World War. 80 07 26

1980 09 02

Cambridge's railway electrification came a step nearer when contractors handed over the shell of the new power signal box near Hills Road Bridge. It will take another 18 months to install the mass of circuitry which will enable a couple of men to control every train, point and signal for miles around. The plan includes floodlit carriage sidings with automatic washing plant for carriages. It is expected to come into operation in May 1982 80 09 02a

1980 09 03

The first football excursion train to leave Cambridge station in almost three years set off for Wolverhampton packed with United fans hoping to cheer John Docherty's men to a place in the third round of the League Cup. The train was one of the first to use the no-alcohol regulation which British Rail hopes will reduce the incidence of vandalism. There was no problem. No matter who they were – schoolboys, skinheads, middle-aged mothers and fathers – no-one tried any surreptitious supping. 80 09 03a

1980 10 03

The new High Speed Train accelerates quickly by railway standards (but not by those of a Mini). And it just keeps on accelerating. At around the 120 mph mark it felt fast. The railway men have padded armchairs but the ride at the guard's end is so bad that BR are contemplating putting the space over to parcels and putting the guards elsewhere. The drivers are dismissive of their skill: powerful engines, powerful brakes, an air-conditioned cab and unrestricted vision make it a bit of a doddle, they say, compared to driving a clapped-out diesel. 80 10 03c

1980 10 07

One of the most dramatically effective road works, the St Ives by-pass which provides the first new crossing of the Great Ouse since the 15th-century, sweeps round the town partially using the track of the old St Ives to March railway line. It will carry virtually all the vehicles presently queuing to cross the medieval stone bridge which has been the worst bottleneck in the Cambridgeshire road system. Now it will be closed and the average flow of 11,000 vehicles a day will dwindle to around 500. 80 10 07a

1980 10 10

The Railway Development Society have hired British Rail's experimental railbus, a mustard-yellow Leyland Experimental Vehicle which looks like two buses bolted back to back for trips from

Cambridge to Bury St Edmunds. It is an important step in the development of a new generation of cheap, light-weight railcars which could replace the present diesel multiple units. 80 10 10a

1980 11 20

The Duxford Flyer is equally at home on road or rail. With the rail wheels down she can shunt up to 700 tons of railway wagons at the CIBA-Geigy plastics factory. Using her road wheels she can potter round at a stately six miles an hour. The four-tone Unilokomotive is part of a scheme to end their dependence on two sidings at Great Chesterford and Whittlesford. The new railway leads directly into the works from the main Cambridge-London railway line and relieves Duxford and Ickleton of lorry traffic. 80 11 20

1980 11 28

The crossing-keeper at Queen Adelaide works 85 hours a week for a wage of £80.78. He rents a three-bedroomed house from British Rail for £10 a week, pays for light and heating even when on duty and is not paid an unsocial hours allowance. The daytime relied crossing keeper is paid more than he is. At night he grabs a few hours' sleep on a couch between the 2.30 train and the next one two hours later. Then he heads out into the freezing cold to open and shut the gates. 80 11 28b-c

1980 12 06

Cambridge railway commuters said goodbye to their two most popular stewards with presents and champagne. British Rail is replacing the three buffet cars and replacing them with micro-buffets and stewards Colin Taylor and Robbie Davidson are resigning. Simon Spanswick of Newport, who fought to save the service, decorated the 20-year-old buffet car with black crepe and Ron Knowles of Horseheath produced a wreath in loving memory. The regulars gathered round the counter and got through quite a lot of drink. 80 12 06

1981 01 07

Work has started on the electrification of the railway line through Huntingdon, St Neots and Sandy. The seven-month programme which involves auger-boring by the trackside and the making of concrete bases for the overhead cable masts is primarily to keep a specialist team of workers in existence. Electrification of the East Coast main line at present goes no further than Hitchin where the Great Northern electric line branches off to Royston. The extension to Peterborough has not yet been authorised. The Cambridge line remains the main priority. 81 01 07c

1981 03 06

Rail closures are back in news; British Rail wants to close the March-Spalding line in May 1982. It was constructed to carry coal; in the 1950s there were lines of coal trains waiting to get into March station yard but then clean air campaigns in London finished the traffic. The track is in good condition and the hard-up Eastern Region want to plunder it for rails and sleepers to use elsewhere. 81 03 06

1981 03 13

Services on the Cambridge to St Ives railway line stopped in October 1970 and researchers want to assess the effects of the closure. But they had difficulty tracking down former users, because of the mobility of the Ouse valley towns. The line closed because the populations they served were small and used trains infrequently; in winter they carried only 10 to 20 passengers, most for non-food shopping or visiting families. Most switched to buses which took between 35-79 minutes for the journey, compared to 27 minutes by train. 81 03 13

1981 05 15

Cambridge ecologists say a bus which can run on railway lines is the solution to transport problems in local villages. They plan to borrow a prototype and run it from the city centre to Huntingdon, using British Rail's tracks. It would stop at Mill Road, Chesterton and North Arbury as well as the former stations en route to Swavesey. From this point the tracks have been removed but it would run along the trackbed to St Ives and the Hemingfords. 81 05 15a

1981 06 03

The last original metal bridge of the old Colne Valley Railway is getting a facelift as sprayers move in to repaint it with the same paint which is used on North Sea rigs, supplied by Signpost Paint of Haverhill. Territorial Army soldiers moved the 44-foot structure, built in 1922, from Earls Colne. It will enable the preservation society to extend its track half a mile across the River Colne. 81 06 03c

1981 09 25

It has taken British Rail 37 years to honour two heroes of an ammunition train explosion at Soham, but now two inter-city locomotives are to be named after Ben Gimbert and Jimmy Nightall. Relations and railway officials will gather at March railway station for the ceremony. Violet Gimbert, Ben's widow, said 'Why didn't they do this when he was alive?' 81 09 25a & b 81 09 29

1982 01 22

British Rail engineers are to dismantle the arch of the rail bridge between Dullingham and Stetchworth, leaving a gaping hole in the road. A replacement is urgently needed but the bridge sits in fine rolling landscape and a concrete structure would detract from the beauty of the countryside. For the men who work on the Hall Farm, part of the Stetchworth Estate, it means a five-mile journey by tractor just to get to their fields down the road. 82 01 22

1982 08 21

British Rail's controversial plans to install automatic half-barriers at Cherry Hinton level crossing have been rejected. It marks a victory for the large numbers of protestors who considered they would be dangerous so close to two primary schools. Had they been put in residents were prepared to stand on the lines and stop trains. 82 08 21

1982 08 27

City councillors want a full-scale transport complex to give quick interchange for rail and bus passengers on long distance and local services to be sited at the railway station. There is plenty of parking with toilet and refreshment facilities already on hand. The County Council's controversial plans to spend £400,000 on rebuilding Drummer Street bus station would still leave it a cramped site with poor access. 82 08 27

1982 08 31

Cambridge heaved a sigh of relief at the weekend as the 4,000-strong 'invasion' by Chelsea football fans passed off in relative peace. There were 51 arrests and one man needed 27 stitches for a stab wound. But as the last 'soccer special' pulled out of the railway station police were congratulating themselves at preventing a repeat of the violence that flared after the club's previous clash at the Abbey Stadium when fans went on the rampage. Chelsea won 1-0. 82 08 31 & 31aa

1982 12 22

Whenever retired railwayman Bill Last gives a talk on the great love of his life he calls it 'Steam in my Blood'. In 1932 he was employed as an apprentice fitter at Cambridge railway station; it was the beginning of a career which saw the end of steam, the coming of diesel and finally the much-heralded onset of electrification. Now a new book, "55 years of East Anglian Steam", has been dedicated to him. 82 12 22b

1983 01 14

British Rail has decided to drop its Ely-based East Anglian motorail service which allows holidaymakers to travel to Scotland or the West Country with their cars and avoid a long slog by motorway. The service has run from Ely since 1979 with two or three trains each way per week. But last year it dwindled to a single train to Stirling on Tuesdays. 83 01 14

1983 01 20

Railway stations at Cambridge, Ely, Newmarket, Audley End, Stansted and Royston could be closed if a Government plan is accepted. Even the electrified Hitchin to Royston line would be abandoned,

leaving only the London to Norwich line in East Anglia. Bus services would be provided instead. By cutting BR to the prime Inter-City routes it would be possible to produce an annual profit of £34 million for a 'commercially viable railway'. 83 01 20

1983 05 17

A railway worker was killed in a bizarre crash. He was unable to escape flying wreckage as two large engines – coupled together – collided with a railway crane used for laying track on the Cambridge – Ipswich line where it passes near Great Wilbraham. Wagon wheels were smashed off axles and heavy railway sleepers broken like matchsticks as the wreckage bounced along the track. The two locomotives were travelling out from Cambridge to shunt the tracklayer up a hill. 83 05 17 p1

1983 09 16

The railways could be on the brink of another Beeching. Under the British Rail five year plan they want to introduce single-line track in places along the Ely-King's Lynn system, reduce the East Coast main line from four to three tracks between Huntingdon and Peterborough and make the Cambridge to Newmarket line a single track. They also hope to extend the electrification of the Royston line. 83 09 16 p1

1983 11 08

The oldest crossing keeper in British Rail's eastern region is to retire because automation is taking over her job. Mrs Minnie Towson, 74, has worked at Trees Crossing, Wendens Ambo for nearly 20 years. Between 15 and 20 motorists use the crossing but the numbers shoot up when flooding made Duck Street impassable. "On one day 198 cars went through", she recalled. "No sooner had one gone over than another was waiting, and the only rest I got was when the train came through. I was up all night. But they widened and dredged the river several years ago". 83 11 08 p6

1983 11 19

Richard Spendlove is best known in Cambridge as the announcer at the railway station. But he is also a journalist, TV presenter and historian whose lifetime association with railways is sealed by the fact that he lives in Brickyard Cottage Coldham's Lane, hard up against the railway line. He is also an authority on weapons whose discovery of a Colt Navy percussion revolver is to be the subject of a television documentary. 83 11 19 p9

1984 06 12

The widow of Soham railway hero Benjamin Gimbert is putting up his medals – including his George Cross – for auction. Mr Gimbert's bravery prevented Soham from being blown sky-high by a blazing ammunition train during the Second World War when he and Jimmy Nightall uncoupled one truck from 50 before it exploded. Sotheby's say the George Cross might fetch £4,500 which Violet needs to buy a flat. 84 06 12 p12

1984 09 28

British Rail has bowed to public opinion and re-introduced famous name, The Fenman, for its 8.43 am train from Cambridge to London. The name was introduced by the LNER in the 1930s for its premier train on the London – Cambridge – King's Lynn line. It lost its headboards over 20 years ago when electrification came and BR feared drivers might be injured taking them on and off. But everyone went on calling it The Fenman.

1985 03 11

A major shake-up to cope with the forecast massive increase in Cambridge traffic has been unveiled by the County Council. It suggests an underground car park at the Butts Green end of Midsummer Common and a new road following the main railway line with a new bridge over the Cam. There could be reconstruction of a number of major road junctions including East Road - Newmarket Road and at Hyde Park Corner with widening of dual carriageways and new cycleways. A park-and-ride system of new car parks linked to the centre by frequent buses is also proposed 85 03 11

1985 03 12

There's bad news for commuters to London. The Fenman, the fastest train on the line is now going to stop at Audley End and Stansted, pushing the journey time up from 62 to 69 minutes. BR's Manager says "Running non-stop trains is fine if you have got the market for them. But generally the Fenman has been running underused". Cambridge line trains have frequently been held up by slower electric trains running late in front of them but this will now change. The new schedules mark the last major revision before electrification, due to start operating between Cambridge and Liverpool Street in May 1987 85 03 12a

1985 05 07

The new-look Cambridgeshire County Council may descend into political chaos unless a compromise over who works with whom can be worked out. The Liberal SDP Alliance with 26 seats is seeking a three-way administration with the Conservatives (29 seats) or the Labour with 21. But Labour has turned down the Alliance Plan and the Conservatives will agree to power sharing only if the new council accepts their financial policies. Controversial plans to widen East Road have been scrapped as has a railway-road plan which would have destroyed large housing and commercial areas of Cambridge. 85 05 07

1985 05 09

Huntingdon and Newport Stations took joint first prize in the Best Kept Railway Station competition with Ely coming joint third. At Huntingdon the 11 staff ensure extra care is taken with disabled passengers, posters and leaflets are kept tidy, brasses and windows cleaned and polished and customers kept informed of breakdowns or delays. There are even six hanging baskets. At Newport senior railwayman Jack Wright and his partner Percy Turner also take a pride in their work while at Ely staff often bring in flowers from their own gardens to brighten up the platforms. 85 05 09a

1985 06 06

Coleridge Community College art students are being commissioned to brighten up the concrete and metalwork of Mill Road Railway Bridge. They will paint a mural depicting a night-and-day changing scene of Cambridge and Romsey featuring some of the better-known buildings of the area. The City Council hopes it will make people respect the environment more and reduce vandalism. The mural will be coated with special anti-graffiti paint. 85 06 06

1986 06 06

Stansted airport will be the third biggest in the UK by 1990, handling 7-8 million passengers a year with the potential for three times that amount. There will be a new rail connection with London, a new £2 million road scheme and the creation of 18,000 new jobs. The Transport Secretary's statement also indicates that the airport might one day expand to a capacity of 25 million passengers per year. But he promises there will be no second runway 85 06 06a

1985 06 14

The controversial 'railway-route' road plan for Cambridge has been killed off for the second time in 10 years. It was intended to relieve traffic & would have run around the southern and eastern outskirts of the city, following the main railway line. Ten years ago Conservative county councillors discovered it would have cost millions of pounds to build and destroy at least 100 houses. Their revival of the plan earlier this year caused a furious outcry: they were swept from control at the recent elections and admit it was one of the main factors in their downfall 85 06 14

1985 09 27

Cambridge Cattle Market opened 100 years ago. Before 1885 it was held at Castle End but the stalls were inadequate for the number of beasts. Then Jesus College provided land near the railway station. Cattle docks from all four railways were within two minutes' walk and there were direct railway links to Scotland and Ireland. There are still weekly sales of stock, with horse sales every five weeks, but the area nearby that was used for grazing is now the Clifton Industrial Estate. It is filled with large corrugated boxes housing a wide variety of light industry and a 'Park and Ride' site 85 09 27

1986 02 01

Cherry Hinton railway crossing protest – 86 02 01

1986 02 06

British Rail's new Sprinter multiple unit has uprated suspension, tinted windows and new livery. With their improved sound proofing, modern décor, heating systems and facilities for the disabled they are being introduced to replace existing units which are over 25 years old. The new service should encourage more people to use trains and ease pressure on the county's overloaded roads between Peterborough and Cambridge 86 02 06

1986 06 23

British Rail is considering reopening part of the disused Cambridge-Huntingdon railway to provide extra transport for the suggested new village in the Swavesey area. They would use the existing platforms at Swavesey, Longstanton and Oakington but would have to build a new one at Histon. Most of the line closed to passenger traffic some years ago but some is used for occasional freight trains to the Chivers factory and fruit orchard complexes 86 06 23

1986 06 26

The old St Ives railway may be dug up and part of the route turned into a new main road to provide direct access for people living in the proposed new village for 3,000 people near Swavesey. British Rail is unenthusiastic about reopening the line without county or private investment. But the County Council has already turned down the suggestion of financial involvement and says it would make more sense for the railway to be dug up and replaced with a main road. 86 06 26a

1986 08 27

British Rail may build new stations near Cambridge and Huntingdon as part of a modernisation scheme. A county transportation spokesman called for stations at Milton and at new villages near Waterbeach and Swavesey which are under consideration in the Structure Plan review. He'd also like to see the St Ives to Cambridge line re-opened and a stop at Milton would help to service the Science Park as well. This was endorsed by the Railway Development Society who also suggested stations at North Arbury and Cherry Hinton. 86 08 27

1986 09 25

Ben Gimbert and Jimmy Nightall have long been folk heroes on the railway following the ammunition train explosion at Soham in June 1944. Jimmy was killed and Ben critically injured as they uncoupled a burning truck loaded with bombs, saving the town. Both were awarded the George Cross. Now, 37 years later, relations, railwaymen and people from Soham gathered at March station where British Rail named two Inter-City diesel locomotives after them. The Bishop of Ely blessed the engines and children from Soham Village College sang a hymn composed especially for the occasion. 86 09 25a & 29

1987 01 19

History was made in Cambridge as the first electric trains arrived and departed at the station, although passengers travelling on the new-style trains seemed unaware of their historic first-day journey. The electrification has cost £10 million with a further £20 million being spent on resigning and improvements, and the main line from Cambridge to London was completed four months ahead of schedule. The operations manager said electrification was not yet fully implemented and electric engines would not be introduced until May 87 01 19

1987 02 24

Electric trains speed service – 87 02 24b

1987 02 24

Cambridge station is receiving a major facelift. As the service changes from diesel-hauled locomotives to more environmentally-acceptable Electric Multiple Units, the last vestiges of the steam trains – which disappeared in the early 60s – have been scrubbed away. The smoky grime of those decades has gone as the whole building received a sandblasted clean-up. The bright brickwork now reveals sets of the heraldic crests of the colleges that were part of the original building in 1845. These have also been restored and crests of those colleges formed since then are being added. 87 02 24a #

1987 03 06

Commuters are suffering from a culture shock say British Rail chiefs who have set out to defend their newly-electrified service between Cambridge and London. Since trial runs began in January, complaints have poured in. The electric trains have disappointed many passengers who are used to a spacious inter-city style service. They say the new carriages are cramped with little luggage space, small seats and no tables. Yet BR is faced with a surge in passengers – especially during the rush hour – and can only cope in this way, even if it means making the quality of the ride slightly less comfortable - 87 03 06

1987 03 23

A new style electric train took just 47 minutes to travel from London to Cambridge breaking the previous speed record of 55 minutes set by a steam loco in the late 1950s. The train brought a group of VIPs to the city for a ceremony to mark the opening of a £650,000 revamp to the railway station. There are new offices and lavatories together with a telephone inquiry bureau while outside the forecourt paving has been extended and trees planted. It is part of a bid to improve train services, which includes electrification of the line to Royston 87 03 23

1987 05 03

There's bad news for commuters to London. The Fenman, the fastest train on the line is now going to stop at Audley End and Stansted, pushing the journey time up from 62 to 69 minutes. BR's Manager says "Running non-stop trains is fine if you have got the market for them. But generally the Fenman has been running underused". Cambridge line trains have frequently been held up by slower electric trains running late in front of them but this will now change. The new schedules mark the last major revision before electrification, due to start operating between Cambridge and Liverpool Street in May 1987 05 03 12a

1987 06 01

A young man became a human torch in a horrific accident at Cambridge station. He had been at a party in Hooper Street when he climbed over the fence separating the garden from the railway, crossed the tracks and climbed to the top of a carriage. Seconds later terrified party guests heard a huge explosion as he was struck by a massive electric shock from the overhead cables. Two others were badly burned when they went to help. All are lucky to have survived 87 06 01

1987 09 10

A train smashed through level-crossing barriers at Shippea Hill after a policeman ordered the gates to be opened to let his car through. No one was hurt in the accident but both sets of crossing gates were demolished. BR said the barriers were closed and warning lights flashing for a train travelling from Norwich to Cambridge when a policeman drove up and asked the signalman to open the gates. He refused but then the plain-clothed officer produced a warrant card and ordered him to do so. The police car sped across the rails but the train could not stop in time. 87 09 10

1987 09 18

The Cambridge - St Ives railway line could be reopened to passengers and linked with Stansted as part of a major new project. The service, shut for nearly 20 years, would be launched with a show-piece electric service along the 14-mile line which is at present only used by freight trains. There would be three new stations at the Science Park, Coldham's Lane and Long Road. Other stations would be built or reopened, under plans announced by the County council, including Chittering, Fulbourn and Cherry Hinton. 87 09 18a

1987 09 21

The scene of carnage on the railway line at Swavesey was too much for one fireman who came to help release the dying and injured from the mangled carriages. He was physically sick at the sight of bodies littered around the burned out shell of the passenger train, but like a true professional he recovered quickly and carried on. Fortunately it was not for real, but part of a major exercise involving all the emergency services. But no-one had told those involved until they actually arrived. They thought they were heading for a major disaster. 87 09 21

1987 09 25

Plans have been unveiled for a new town near Chittering, to be called Waterfenton. It would have 3,000 houses, a major shopping centre, schools, leisure park, swimming pool, ice-skating rink, hotel and its own railway station. There will also be a church, clinic and all the usual services including pubs, banks and garages, developers say. House prices will start at around £35,000, (about £80,500 now) making it attractive to people who cannot afford homes in Cambridge. The project would provide at least 2,000 jobs and take about 20 years to complete. This is the 13th settlement plan to be suggested in the last six months. 87 09 25

1987 10 09

Railway line to St Ives & Soham station may be reopened – 87 10 09

1987 10 27

An overhead cable car system between St Ives and Cambridge has been suggested by the Willingham-based Alternative Transport Society as an alternative option to a rail link. There would be a lack of noise and fumes and cables would be high enough over level crossings, eliminating congestion. It would have simple platforms for alighting with cars slowed automatically by computer control and the total all-weather system would ensure safe and reliable transport. But opponents describe it as a non-starter and just pie in the sky. 87 10 27b

1987 11 27

Anson Packaging's new £1.5 million extension to its production space was opened by the Mayor of Ely, Coun. Margaret Gordon-Potts. The firm, which started in 1971 at St Ives with 12 staff, moved to the site of the former Haddenham railway station in 1977. It now operates 24 hours a day, seven days a week and employs 300 people. They are a leading producer of thermoformed plastic packaging for the food trade and an approved supplier to Marks & Spencer. 87 11 27

1987 12 18

Cherry Hinton level crossing is being restored by volunteers at the Museum of Technology in Cheddars Lane, Cambridge. The aim is to resite the crossing somewhere in the area on private land. Former mayor John Woodhouse, who has campaigned against British Rail replacing the gates with automatic barriers will be asked to perform the opening ceremony. 87 12 18

1988 01 07

A new railway station designed to ease Cambridge's worsening transport problems could be sited near the A10 at Milton, says British Rail. No costs for the 'Cambridge Parkway' halt have yet been worked out but BR would almost certainly look for cash from the community to build the new station and car park. Last year the City and County Councils provided £125,000 help pay for new crossing gates at Cherry Hinton. 88 01 07c

1988 02 17

Three new railway stations at Cherry Hinton, Fulbourn and the Chittering area have been suggested in a County council report. But stations at Harston, Offord and Soham have been rejected on grounds of cost. British Rail plans to build a new 'parkway' station to the north of Cambridge to meet growing commuter passenger growth. But calls to re-open the Cambridge to St Ives freight line to passengers

are firmly ruled out. It would cost £4.84 million, greatly outweighing potential income, consultants say 88 02 17

1988 04 22

Cambridge to Royston goes electric. Gala day on Bank Holiday Monday with personal appearance by TV personality Gary Wilmot, live music, exhibit of railway rolling stock and special shuttle service of electric trains free to everyone on the day between Cambridge and Royston. 88 04 22

1988 05 14

Two new railway level crossings are being installed on the line between Ely & March over the weekend. The crossings, at Beald Drove, North Fen, Second Drove and Black Bank will have automatic barriers. They are triggered by oncoming trains and mean the end of manned gates or barriers operated by signalmen. 88 05 14

1988 06 10

The final phase of Huntingdon northern bypass opened five months ahead of schedule. The stretch from Hartford to St Ives is part of the £5 million scheme which saw the Spittals roundabout section completed in 1980, allowing industrial growth west of the railway in Huntingdon. The contractors also had to build a railway bridge across the east coast main line. An estimated 14,000 vehicles will use the bypass each year. 88 06 10

1988 10 18

Cambridge may have a city-wide high-speed monorail system linking with all nearby villages allowing shoppers to leave their cars at home and travel high above the traffic jams. It could be expensive to set up but would have low running costs and be reliable. Eight years ago dons at Girton College came up with a plan for a monorail to link it with the university quarter but nothing ever came of it. The County Council has already commissioned experts to consider a light railway system linked to the proposed park-and-ride system 88 10 18a

1989 01 20

Seasoned commuters on the Cambridge line will go to almost any lengths to avoid catching the 'cattle-truck' electric 321 multiple-unit trains to London. Even being crammed on to the older locomotive-hauled trains is preferable. "There are just two carriages where you can smoke on the 8am train from Cambridge; every day I have to stand, nothing ever happens when you complain", said one regular traveller. Many will either work late or go for a drink at the end of the day to catch the 6.35pm locomotive-hauled train. Life will be only marginally better when the new electric units come into full operation, seating will still be cramped, there will be no tables for people to work, no buffer, no phones and not enough first class seats, some claim. 89 01 20a

1989 02 08

House prices to soar following electrification of railway line – 89 02 08

1989 03 09

Railway cuts of Beeching era – feature 89 03 09b & c, 89 03 10a

1989 04 11

Plans for the new village of Waterfenton, between Cambridge and Ely, include a new railway station. There would eventually be 3,000 homes, many with lawns running to the edge of a chain of lakes, with a mix of shops, offices and supermarket together with a 100-bedroomed hotel and a golf course. The site is less than five metres above sea level but would be protected by an earth mound around Chittering with a 'tump' – a mound topped with an obelisk or old windmill. 89 04 11a

1989 04 24

British Rail is planning a second Cambridge railway station, provisionally known as Cambridge Parkway, close to Milton and the A45 northern bypass. It is unlikely to be ready in time for the start

of electrification services to King's Lynn in October 1991, but could follow shortly afterwards. However the site needs much better access and provision of parking space. It would serve the high-tech Science Park and provide a way for commuters to join trains without having to struggle through the city. 89 04 24

1989 05 17

A light railway may be built, with private cash, linking the centre of Cambridge with the main line station on the outskirts. It could form a part of an extensive park-and-ride network based on a light railway system around the northern and eastern industrial sections of the city. County Councillors have also asked experts to consider building a gigantic car park under the Butts Green end of Midsummer Common. A new road system to relieve the heavily congested areas of Milton Road and Elizabeth Way are also being examined to sort out the growing traffic chaos quickly. 89 05 17

1989 06 09

Cambridgeshire's new traffic chief has vowed to end Cambridge's traffic and parking chaos within four years. A 'grand traffic management plan' will be drafted by officials and meetings arranged with business bosses. He wants a better road system to serve the industrial quarters, a new light railway system linked to a park-and-ride scheme and a possible car park under Midsummer Common. 89 06 09

1989 07 07

A beerhouse in Horseheath, the only one of its kind in the area, is to be demolished. The red brick bungalow on Horseheath Green was built in the 1860s for navvies working on the Haverhill to London railway line. Known as 'The Shant', it is now dilapidated and subsiding. The Parish Council say it is a charming small-scale Victorian building worth preserving. However a conservation officer describes it as pleasant and unobtrusive but of only limited interest. 89 07 07a

1989 07 12

Pymore – or Pymoor as locals prefer – is a community of some 400 souls deep in the fens. The village has only recently become attractive to commuters, even now there are only a few of them and they use their cars to get to work because there's no station. There used to be a railway siding and a signal box on the Ely to March line, but it closed a decade ago. The village school shut eight years ago, though young families have moved in, attracted by cheaper prices. There is a social club where villagers can meet, but no pub – though local builder Alan Crook would love to build one if there were demand. In the meantime he is putting up a £135,000 four-bedroom chalet-style home in the centre of the village. 89 07 12

1989 08 31

The 1830 Beer Act encouraged people to set up beer houses to combat the problem of gin drinking. By 1840 Oakington had eight pubs and another, the New Inn, opened when the railway came. The flourishing fruit trade brought a lot of business but the closure of the line in 1970 saw a big drop in sales and in it was suddenly closed by the brewery. This leaves just the White Horse which was first shown in records of 1765. 89 08 31a

1989 09 14

Rail commuters banned from taking bikes on peak-hour trains – 89 09 14

1989 10 03

A light railway system running in a tunnel under Midsummer Common is the latest official suggestion to help solve traffic problems in the centre of Cambridge. It would be an alternative to a line running down a widened section of Newmarket Road. The underground railway would link with a number of other lines from surrounding villages as far out as Fenstanton and terminate at a station in Malcolm Street. The County Council will invest £60,000 to see if a car park under Midsummer Common is feasible and another £150,000 in a feasibility study for a 60-mph light rail system. 89 10 03a

1989 10 04

Jim Paice, MP, has launched a bid to reopen the Cambridge to St Ives branch railway and extend it to link with the East Coast main line at Huntingdon. He says it could reduce traffic on the heavily-congested A604. Enthusiasts packed British Rail 'specials' up and down the 14-mile line which is normally used by just one freight train a day carrying mineral workings from Fen Drayton; it is also used occasionally by Chivers jam company. 89 10 04b

1989 11 02

A railway station proposed for the planned new town of Waterfenton, near Chittering, would be a 'tremendous plus', while a dual carriageway will link it with the main A10, developers claim. It will comprise 1,500 homes (capable of expansion to 3,000) with a mix of rented and owner-occupied properties and will rely on Cambridge for central services. This is one of three rival schemes being considered at an enquiry along with another near Denney Abbey and 'Westmere' between Stretham and Wilburton. 89 11 02

1989 11 28

The new South East Cycleway from Market Square to Cherry Hinton follows quiet back roads, avoiding the nightmarish Mill Road which can reduce cyclists to a nervous wreck. It includes a new £2million bridge across the railway near Cambridge station. This is a striking structure with a triangular tower from which cables support a cycle and walkway fully protected from the elements by a transparent polycarbonate tube. It is thought to be the longest bridge of its type in Western Europe. 89 11 28a, 29

1990 03 12

A major new railway station could be built behind Cambridge Business Park. It would become the main station for Cambridge with the original one becoming just a stop-over point— 90 03 12

1990 03 24

Hundreds of people swamped the first passenger train between Swavesey and Cambridge for 20 years and at least 200 were left standing. The special service, chartered by the Railway Development Society was overwhelmed. There were 500 waiting at Swavesey, 100 at Longstanton, 200 at Oakington and another 100 at Histon. The train arrived at Cambridge station more than 20 minutes late. 90 03 24b 90 03 26a

1990 05 11

Railway – last 125 InterCity diesel at Huntingdon; replaced by electric trains – 90 05 11a

1990 06 23

Cambridge to Swavesey railway line – support for reinstatement; special train – 90 06 23a

1990 09 07

Light railway system to beat traffic chaos would cost £100m – 90 09 07

1990 10 17

More buses, a cycling scheme and shop-to-home delivery service suggested as ways solving Cambridge traffic; light railway is not answer says Prof Plowden – 90 10 17a